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INTRODUCTION

121 African continuities as he acknowledged, he deplored. Slavery he regarded as a school—mostly successful—for civilizing savages."[10]

American sociologists expressed a more clear-cut catastrophist interpretation of the black cultural experience, following the position enunciated by the Chicago sociologist Robert E. Park in 1919. According to Park, "the Negro, when he landed in the United States, left behind him almost everything but his dark complexion and his tropical temperament. It is very difficult to find in the South today anything that can be traced directly back to Africa."[11] The foremost black sociologist of the first half of the twentieth century, E. Franklin Frazier, became a leading spokesman for the catastrophist position. "Probably never before in history," he wrote in his 1939 book *The Negro Family in the United States*, "has a people been so completely stripped of its social heritage as the Negroes who were brought to America." The positive result of losing their African heritage, however, was that they had "gradually taken over the more sophisticated American culture."[12] These sophisticated restatements of part of Phillips's position reveal a certain embarrassment over the African past and the shameful experience of slavery.

12 Sociological studies of the South Carolina sea islands followed the catastrophist interpretation of Park and Frazier. In his 1930 book *Folk Culture on St. Helena Island*, Guy B. Johnson traced the genealogy of black speech, songs, and folk beliefs mainly to white sources. "The Negro's almost complete loss of African language heritages is startling at first glance," he wrote, "but slavery as practised in the United States made any other outcome impossible." On the sea is-
12 lands, "the Negro took over the English of the whites with
•177 whom he was associated, and he did it remarkably well."
Gullah grammar, he said, "is merely simplified English gram-
(193) mar." As for songs, "the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed

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•177 from white folk music." Even "superstitions," so often regarded as evidence of the primitive African origins of black southerners, were attributed by Johnson to white sources. "A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs found in the South is of European descent." Other studies in the St. Helena project by Guion Griffis Johnson and T. J. Woofter, Jr. were in the same tradition.[13]

While black scholars such as John Wesley Work, James Weldon Johnson, and N. G. J. Ballanta had claimed African origins for the Afro-American spirituals, the only white scholar who had shared that view was the music critic Edward Krehbiel in 1914. In the 1920s and 1930s a number of white scholars, including Edward M. von Hornbostel, Newman Ivey White, Robert Winslow Gordon, Guy B. Johnson, and George Pullen Jackson, had contended that the Afro-American spirituals represented selective borrowings from white folk hymnody.[14] For the most part folklorists of the period tended to publish large collections of lore without drawing many conclusions about them. Elsie Clews Parsons collected black folklore in the sea islands off South Carolina and in the Caribbean. She refrained from inferences, but her careful annotations showed the similarity of her material to folklore collected in Africa. On the other hand, Newbell Niles Puckett, in his *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro* (1926), said that, while most whites believed black "superstitions" to be relics of African heathenism, "in four cases out of five it is a European dogma from which only centuries of patient education could wean even his own ancestors." The black folklorist Zora Neale Hurston suggested a more complex relationship between African and European elements underlying Afro-American folklore but was somewhat vague about their proportions.[15]

12 Both Elsie Clews Parsons and Zora Neale Hurston were trained anthropologists who had studied with Franz Boas at Columbia University. Boas—eager to combat the evolution-

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121 mants to be speaking in "dialect," in contrast to speaking
"correctly," they nevertheless render that speech so accu-
128 rately that scholars can reconstruct the grammatical rules of
(126) the creole language as spoken in coastal Georgia. Further-
more, the Savannah fieldworkers make a determined effort to
note generational and educational differences in speech and
to demonstrate such sociolinguistic features as code-switching
("excitement or emotion often throws the speaker back into a
type of speech which ordinarily he no longer uses"). In the
●(197) pages of *Drums and Shadows* modern readers can find the
evidence to support a far more sophisticated understanding
of the creolization of Afro-American culture than those put
forward by Phillips, or Park, or even Herskovits.[illegible]

128 (126) LOOK AT THE PICTURES. Among the notable features of *Drums and Shadows* is a series of sensitive and evocative photographs by Muriel and Malcolm Bell, Jr. These pictures transcend mere illustration; they are, in fact, a scholarly photographic essay. In the original publication the photographs followed the text almost as an afterthought. For this Brown Thrasher edition new prints have been made from the original negatives. Some additional photographs made for the original project but not published in the first edition are now included. The photographs have been printed and their sequence organized under the supervision of Muriel and Malcolm Bell for this edition, and the photographic essay is now printed where it should be—at the beginning. It is an essay that amplifies and comments on the life of these people visually, an essay that says things about their culture that cannot be said in words.

121 128 Look at the faces of these people of coastal Georgia. Look at the way they sit or stand. Look at their houses and their surroundings. Listen to their voices. In these pictures and in these words a portrait emerges: a portrait of a certain time and place, a portrait of an important part of southern culture.

FOREWORD

121 study of these heritages may point the way to racial under-
114 standing and the alleviation of friction between the races in
the United States. My own position lies somewhere between
•177 these two, since I believe that there are a few important
178 African survivals in the United States, but that the degree
of significance of these African heritages is questionable in view of the overwhelming tendency of the culture of the white man to displace the Negro's African culture, and that their influence on the everyday problem of race relations is relatively inconsequential.

121 However, regardless of differences of opinion as to the nature and importance of African heritages in our civilization, almost everyone would agree that the question is interesting and worthy of study. Such study may not only satisfy a wholesome curiosity but may throw light on the scientific problem of the processes which go on when two different cultures come into contact.
[128] In dealing with the material collected for this book, Miss Granger makes no decision as to the African sources of particular traits. She has, however, included a valuable appendix on West African culture patterns and has cited therein numerous possible parallels between these patterns and the culture of Georgia coastal Negroes.

Drums and Shadows will interest the scholar as well as the general reader, for it has combed over a strategic area, has discovered clues, has raised problems, and thus made easier the way of any cultural anthropologist who might want to follow and attempt a definitive scientific study of the question of African heritages and influences in American civilization.

Guy B. Johnson
University of North Carolina
1940

[p. xxxvi is blank]

INTRODUCTION

175 This continuous exchange and renewal of folk customs intensified
178 the folk urge fostered by isolation. This naturally
177 delayed the intrusion of white culture and the Negro kept
intact much of his racial heritage. For these reasons the
121 student of Negro folklore turns to coastal Georgia for source
material. Here he may still find living Negroes who remember parents or grandparents born in Africa.

Much research has been done and many books written on the folk customs and beliefs of the Negro. In this section, however, where the Negro has been kept more or less racially distinct the field is so rich that intensified study in special areas still reveals valuable information.

In an effort to present an accurate pictorial account of this type of Georgia coastal Negro these field reports have been compiled. They endeavor to present the customs and beliefs of what is left of a generation closely linked to its native African origin. Some of this generation of Negroes were slaves; many of them are the children of former slaves and the grandchildren of native Africans. Their customs and tales are their own special heritage. Knowledge of them must be recorded now while this generation lives or they will lose much of their accuracy and value.

121 No attempt has been made to give a cross section of the
Negro scene as a whole, but only that part of it which would
128 seem to indicate the survival elements. This limitation of the field necessarily concentrates this study on the more primitive aspects of a comparatively small group of persons and ignores a large section of the Negro population whose interest and point of view are vastly different. Effort has been made to base the studies on source material provided by the Negro himself. Footnotes which give African parallels have been used. Though an African parallel does not confine the custom or belief to Africa alone, it provides interesting comparative material for the reader.

121 Visiting the communities was an interesting experience.

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St. Simons Island

131 ST. SIMONS, ONE OF THE LARGER COASTAL ISLANDS,
lies off the Georgia coast not far from Brunswick on the
mainland. For about fifteen years it has been connected by
[491] causeway and bridge to the Coastal Highway. St. Simons
has always had a considerable Negro population, owing to
177 the fact that from early times many large plantations as
well as smaller settlements flourished on the island. This
has given the Negroes considerable contact with white people and of late years with the rather sophisticated type of
tourist. Fearing that the old customs would have been for-
124 gotten, we had little hope of good field work here.

However, we had not worked half a day in the north end settlements of the island before we were happily surprised. Around Harrington and Frederica there still live many old Negroes who remember the customs and beliefs told them by their parents and grandparents. Most of them are intelligent, reticent, and proud. Not easy of approach but with good manners, they responded to the request to help record the traditional beliefs of their forefathers. Once they had realized the object of our conversation, they talked freely and graciously, and several were outstanding for their keen comprehension.

115 We went to see Catherine Wing,* who lives at the corner
of the Harrington Road and the main Frederica Highway.
[342] Her comfortable frame house was set in the midst of a flower
garden and her washtubs were conveniently placed under a
grape arbor and spreading live oaks.

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[351] * *Catherine Wing, St. Simons Island.*

[296]

133 malaw, and Edisto islands to Beaufort; down past St. Helena, Hunting,
103 Fripp, and Parris islands; past Hilton Head and Daufuski to Savannah;
from Tybee, Wassaw, Ossabaw, and St. Catherines to Sapelo; past St.
Simons and Jekyll islands to Cumberland on the Georgia-Florida
border—the Sea Islands guard the coast. The coastline is intersected not
133 only by Winyah and Bull bays, Charleston Harbor, and St. Helena, Port
Royal, Sapelo, and St. Andrew sounds, but also by many lesser inlets
curling around the Sea Islands. Bounded on one side by the ocean and on
the other by the salt marsh, these Sea Islands use the energy of wind and
wave to build sand barriers that protect the mainland from storm and
surf.

The Sea Islands north of Charleston are often older beach resorts
131 such as Pawleys Island and the Isle of Palms. Their residents and vis-
● 177 itors are mainly white. Other islands are wildlife sanctuaries such as
the 31,000-acre Cape Romaine National Wildlife Refuge, the 20,000-
136 acre Tom Yawkee Wildlife Center on South Island, and the 17,000-
185 acre Belle W. Baruch research facilities on Hobcaw Barony. They
serve as home for such endangered species as the bald eagle, the Eastern brown pelican, the short-nosed sturgeon, and the loggerhead turtle.
Many islands south of Charleston are populated entirely or primarily
131 by blacks, whose venerable folk culture and vivid creole language are
361 the subject of this book. On the coastal mainland adjacent to the Sea
Islands are black people who share that folk culture and that creole
language. While they are not—strictly speaking—Sea Islanders, in
many ways this book tells their story too.

For two centuries this coastal region has been the home of enslaved
175 Africans and their descendants. Theirs is a sad but inspiring story.
567 They built—in a very literal sense—the plantations, and they tilled the
rich fields of rice, indigo, or Sea Island cotton. Some of the slaves were brought to the Sea Islands by Barbadian planters who migrated to the Carolina colony in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a refuge from the overcrowding of Barbados. Many more were imported directly from Africa. By the American Revolution the slaves, from various parts of Africa and from various ethnic and linguistic groups, had already created a distinctive culture. During the Civil War, when white planter families fled the Sea Islands before the invading Union troops, Sea Island blacks began to cultivate the land for themselves. Hundreds of them joined the Union Army in the celebrated First South Carolina Volunteers. On January 16, 1865, General William Tecumseh

178 [197] Perhaps most important, Gullah—the creole language developed by the slaves on the Sea Islands and in the South Carolina and Georgia low-country—continued to be the language in which their folk culture was passed down to posterity. Proverbs, metaphors of social experience, continued to reflect the African preference for speaking by indirection; and African naming patterns persisted on the Sea Islands. For generations, folktales of the audacious animal trickster Ber Rabbit and of the no less audacious slave trickster John blended elements of African folk narrative with elements of the Sea Islanders' historical experience. For generations talented Sea Island artisans created traditional arts and crafts such as coiled sweetgrass baskets and strip quilts. Out of this tradition one Sea Islander, Philip Simmons of Daniel Island, became Charleston's preeminent artist in wrought-iron gates. For generations folk medicine of both the pharmaceutical and the psychological varieties continued to heal the sick on the Sea Islands, and natural phenomena continued to serve as signs foretelling the future, whether changing weather or impending death. Ghosts or haunts—the spirits of the dead—returned from time to time to trouble the living, although local conjurers (assisted by various substances held to be magical) helped to ward off their unwelcome visits. For generations Sea Islanders entertained their children with play songs after the day's work was done. At night they sang the children to sleep with lullabies. On Saturday nights they held dances and frolics. Their folk version of Christianity retained the earliest "shouting" styles of singing spirituals, in which the African religious phenomenon of spirit possession remained vividly linked with prayer, music, and bodily movement. No one thought this way of life would change. The life of the land and the people seemed fixed in an invisible circle, enclosed by the waters and the passage of time.

● 177 And then something happened. It did not seem revolutionary at the time. In 1950 Georgia timber magnate General Joseph B. Fraser and his associates bought large tracts of land on the southern end of Hilton Head Island. At first they simply cut down the ancient stands of timber. But soon his son Charles, a young Yale law school graduate, launched the development of a series of lavish resort "plantations"—Sea Pines, Hilton Head, and Honey Horn—pioneering the "resort island" concept. In 1956 the first bridge to Hilton Head Island was constructed. Feverish land speculation ensued as other developers scurried onto Hilton Head and other Sea Islands to exploit the boom, buying up land from black islanders and building more resorts.

● 177 Hilton Head Island became known as a resort for the affluent. But similar developments have taken place on other Sea Islands. Hilton Head appears in many ways to have forecast what the future would bring. Its recent course is worth closer examination. In 1950 nearly all of the residents of Hilton Head were black; by 1980 they were outnumbered five to one by whites. According to Fraser, development has been a good thing for black natives of the islands. Resort development
177 "caused black-owned land on Hilton Head Island to increase in value
423 from $100 an acre near the beach or near the marshes to $50,000 or
435 $100,000 an acre today. This flows into the pocket of the blacks who
elect to sell," he says.

> 432 I sold lots at $7,000 which today sell for $350,000. Some blacks have done the same. Some of them, smarter than I was, held onto their land, as I and developers developed our land and pushed up the values. Now they are selling. I am jubilant, positively jubilant, when a black farm family that has held the land for five generations on Hilton Head Island, land that was worth $100 when we arrived here, sells it today for $50,000. I think that's wonderful.

177 Fraser contends that

> 423 432 it is a wise thing, for those who need the money, to elect to sell. Every black family that sells a portion of their heritage that was maintained with great struggle and great effort by their parents and grandparents and great-grandparents, and uses a part of that heritage to send a child to engineering school or to boarding school, is making an investment in the future of that family. I wish more of them would do it.

The emergence of Hilton Head Island as a playground for rich white northerners, in the opinion of Charles Fraser, has been beneficial for everyone.

But others are less sanguine. "We have witnessed some changes on Hilton Head over the last twenty-five years," suggests Emory Campbell, a native of the island, "and they have not all been good from the black perspective." Some contend that black landowners were induced to sell their land too cheaply—either through trickery or because they did not know the land's fair market value. Unquestionably some black families made money on the transactions, at least by comparison with the barterlike economy of the predevelopment decades. But even those who

177 received fair prices made money at the cost of selling their birthright.
For those who were unwilling to sell, rising land values only meant
423 rising property taxes. Many were forced to sell because they could no
432 longer afford to keep up the additional tax burden. "We have witnessed
land being sold because the family no longer wanted to tolerate taxes on land that's doing nothing," Campbell stresses. A money economy has come to Hilton Head and the other Sea Islands. Land is being sold, he points out, "merely because people, families, need the money."*

The resort island rich give Beaufort County, which includes Hilton
511 Head and other Sea Islands, the second highest per capita income in
464 South Carolina. But unemployment in the county surpasses the state
average with depressing regularity. And half the county's nonagricul-
177 tural employees work in low-paying service jobs—as caddies, cooks, maids, maintenance workers, waiters, and waitresses. It is certainly true that this generation of islanders is better paid than the generation before them; it is not necessarily true that they are economically better off. But the islanders now live in a money economy. They must earn money to live.

While low-paying service jobs are easily available on the resort
464 islands, higher-paying skilled occupations are rare. And those posi-
871 tions are not normally filled by islanders, who usually lack the requi-
site education. Incentives to acquire an education for positions that
177 seem to be set aside for outsiders are lacking; incentives to take the low-paying jobs are abundant. The situation "enslaves" young people, says Emory Campbell. "They forget that a job is only a means to an end." Sea Island blacks "are not motivated to go beyond the tenth, eleventh grade because they see the immediacy of the dollar," he notes. But education does not seem to break the cycle on the Sea Islands. "The few that have gone to college, they're motivated to leave rather than to stay. They can't tolerate the situation. We just don't have the kinds of jobs here that would dignify staying. They become overwhelmed by the subservient roles that most blacks are put in here."

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*I was present at the exchange between Charles E. Fraser and Emory Campbell in Charleston on December 3, 1982. The occasion was a conference entitled "Coastal Development: Past, Present, and Future," organized by the Coastal Heritage Program of the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium with support from the South Carolina Committee for the Humanities. Their remarks are printed in the proceedings of the conference, pp. 55–56, 63. Additional comments by Campbell are taken from "We Are an Endangered Species: An Interview with Emory Campbell," by Vernie Singleton, *Southern Exposure* 10 (May–June, 1982): 37–39.

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
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Fraser is sensitive to charges that hiring practices are discriminatory. "I get continued crap that we should confine our employment exclusively to people who were born on Hilton Head Island, without regard to their ability or what they do," he complains. "When we had a vice president for personnel, black, college educated, graduate degree in personnel management, we got nothing but hell because he had not been born on Hilton Head Island. This is the sort of crap we get over and over again." Fraser's preference for well-qualified employees to fill upper-echelon positions is understandable. But the fact remains that of all the jobs created by development on the Sea Islands, virtually the only ones which are available to the Sea Islanders themselves are jobs as servants.

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Even more striking than the economic consequences of development on the indigenous population of the Sea Islands has been its cultural impact. Modernization has caused severe social dislocations. "Developers just come in and roll over whoever is there," charges Emory Campbell, "move them out or roll over them and change their culture, change their way of life, destroy the environment, and therefore the culture has to be changed." Perhaps the unintentional vanguard of white cultural imperialism has been the school. Campbell calls for a school system "that is in tune with the culture of the black child of this island. That child's heritage," he notes, "is different from a child who came here from Chicago, New York, or Ohio. And that's where a lot of our white kids are coming from; so you put them in a classroom and say you're integrated and you've got a classroom situation at Hilton Head Elementary School that's oriented to those kids who are moving in." Teachers with little understanding of the islands' rich historical and cultural heritage criticize the island children's Gullah speech—as though the children were the outsiders who speak funny! They do not know that Gullah is a creole language with a very regular syntax and phonology of its own. They do not know that other forms of the islanders' cultural expression are parts of an ancient and beautiful tradition with a rich history behind it. It is little wonder that many Sea Island children—in the face of daily assaults on the way they talk and the way they express themselves—see the school as the enemy, taking away more than it gives. With white dominance of the economic and educational systems some Sea Islanders have become ashamed of their culture. Thus the schools, intended to be the agents of cultural enrichment, have become agents of cultural destruction.

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● 177 178 [458 There is a story that during the 1930s an aged black man on one of the Sea Islands was asked how he was faring in the Great Depression. "Dat Depression new-come," he replied. "Ah bin-hyuh. *New-come* can't beat *bin-hyuh.*" The Sea Islands survived the Great Depression, but now they suffer from what the historian Eric Hobsbawm calls "the impact of social transformation." The old coexists uneasily with the new, *bin-hyuh* with *come-hyuh;* but *bin-hyuh* is on the defensive. Not even those islands that have thus far eluded the bulldozers have immunity to development. To endure, a community must be able to bequeath its shared traditional expressive culture to the next generation. Without the living context in which that expressive culture arises, cultural endurance is by no means certain. It is not the wildlife of the islands that is the most endangered, says Emory Campbell. "*We* have become the new endangered species."

121 This book is an act of cultural conservation. Patricia Jones-Jackson knew and loved the people of the Sea Islands and their rich folk culture. Here she vividly presents some of those people and some of that folk culture. In these pages the old talk and the old tales, the old prayers and the old personal expressiveness come vibrantly to life. The talk and tales and prayers and expressions are more than just quaint cultural artifacts. They have provided the islanders with a sense of continuity with generations gone before, a precious lifeline to courageous ancestors who survived slavery and endured generations of poverty. That heritage is a source of strength that has enabled them to cope with the hail and upheaval of life. As we drift further and further out upon the sea of modernization, that heritage may be as crucial to our sanity and survival as to theirs. The Sea Islanders and their folk culture have something precious to offer us if we do not destroy them first.

When Roots Die makes an important contribution to the fields of linguistics and folklore. Both folklorists and linguists can learn much from these interdisciplinary explorations. What makes this a really important book, however, is the fact that it is the first book-length treatment of contemporary Gullah language and culture that combines sound scholarship with a clear and engaging style accessible to nonlinguists and nonfolklorists. Readers will find that it can be read for pleasure, but not without profit. It reaches beyond scholars to provide a general audience—teachers, school principals, employers, librarians,

Preface

178 (131) The black inhabitants of the Sea Islands, located off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina, have provided researchers with a reservoir of distinctively African and African-American cultural roots. Their unique society has been developed, nurtured, and maintained by the geographical isolation of the islands, the social and economic independence of the islanders, and the marginal contact with residents outside the Sea Island area. These factors have created and fostered an environment within which the inhabitants—West African slaves, ex-slaves, and their free ancestors—have been able to reinforce vigorous traditions characteristic of their culture, and to perpetuate communities with concentrations of African influences paralleled by no other black areas in the United States. Remnants of these African traditions were passed on to the islanders through narrative tales, religious practices, burial ceremonies, language patterns, and other practices, only some of which have been recorded by linguists, sociologists, anthropologists, and folklorists.

177 Today changes are being brought to the islands, and the Sea Island culture is declining under the resulting social pressures. On the one hand, outsiders, particularly white Americans, Arabs, and other foreigners, are moving to the area and in some instances commercializing entire islands. On the other hand, the building of bridges has brought about easier access to many of the islands and better educational facilities and job opportunities for their inhabitants. As would be expected, such forces are motivating a break in cultural traditions, an upheaval of social patterns, and a general disruption of the old norms, all of which are now in some danger of becoming lost.

128 This book is structured to provide a comprehensive view of the Sea Island culture and literature and of the Gullah (or, as it is called in Georgia, Geechee) language. Chapter 1 is devoted primarily to a survey of the area and its people. I judge it important to provide a full

491 The main roadways branch into dozens of dirt roads angling around bends, across creeks, and through narrow passageways before 342 leading to small communities. As remote as some homes are, many are [177] large, fully equipped, and constructed of brick or wood with aluminum siding. These homes reflect modernization, improved education, and the rise of a younger, more affluent island society. Yet nestled amid these relatively expensive new homes are ancient, two-roomed houses, gray and weather-beaten but standing firm on the wooden blocks that have supported them for as much as a century and a half. These houses are called "shanties" by the islanders and are most often occupied by the oldest members of the community. Because islanders believe that [827] the human breath is the primary factor in preserving a dwelling place, even a young family will sometimes prefer living in a shanty which has been recently occupied to living in a newer, larger home which has [356] been vacated for a long time. Most shanties are kept neat and orderly—a remarkable housekeeping achievement, because as many as [592] ten people may occupy one of these tiny older homes.

In addition to the modern homes and the shanties, trailer homes are common on the Sea Islands, especially on islands with no bridges connecting them to the coast. The trailer homes are convenient and economical. They generally come fully equipped with modern conveniences, and they can be easily dismantled, loaded onto a barge, and floated to an island.

351 Many of the older and some of the newer island homes are built to share a common yard area, which is kept free of grass and litter and is 171 swept as part of the daily care. Maintaining a communal dirt yard was once routine for black families in the South, and it is also traditional in most West African villages. Even members of some of the most affluent African families, with expensive eight-bedroom homes, magnificent by any standard, keep the yard area completely free of grass by morning and afternoon sweepings. This smooth yard is functional on the Sea Islands as well as in Africa: keeping it grassless helps to eliminate insects and provides a clean, unlittered surface where children can play and elders can congregate to smoke, talk, and drink palm wine. This communal yard was the primary place where I was taken both on the Sea Islands and in Africa to listen to folktales and singing.

162 tained 30,922 whites and 71,868 blacks. By 1940 the Sea Island com-
(175) munities still maintained a majority black population. The 1940 census
for Johns Island, South Carolina, revealed that of the 3,534 residents of
the island, 2,623 were black. On Wadmalaw Island, where many of the
data for this study were collected, only 251 of the 1,607 inhabitants in
1940 were white. The black-to-white ratio of Charleston County and the
surrounding Sea Islands remained fairly stable until the late 1930s and
[161] the 1940s. The BCD Council of Governments records that between
1930 and 1970 Charleston County witnessed a 145% population in-
crease, with further increments of approximately 4,200 persons per year
between 1970 and 1978. This population growth is largely attributed to
the increasing industrialization and commercialization brought by the
new bridges connecting many of the islands to the coast. Most of the im-
migration since 1930 has been by whites. The 1970 census indicated that
blacks constituted only 31.4 percent of the population of Charleston
County, compared to more than 50 percent in 1930.[15]

161 While this distribution does reflect a major change in racial com-
position, especially in the Charleston County area during the last 100
or more years, the demographic picture of the Sea Islands is somewhat
obscured by the distribution of the new arrivals. Only a few of the Sea
Islands have experienced major changes in population and industrializa-
tion, and these are not among the most remote and economically dis-
[464] tressed areas. Unemployment and population lag seem to be related to
remoteness: islands with adequate bridges and paved roadways that
provide excellent access to and from the Charleston area, like James and
Johns in South Carolina, are undergoing significant population growth,
as is shown in Table 2.

161 The population growth for the Johns Island Division is due to ma-
jor commercialization and to developmental pressures from the ex-
177 clusive resort construction still occurring on Kiawah and Seabrook Is-
179 lands, which are a part of the division (see Appendix 4).A James Island,
situated just over the bridge from Charleston, is highly urbanized and
is one of the major arteries to the Folly Beach area. The new inhabi-
tants in both island divisions, as elsewhere, are primarily white.
161 Whereas blacks constituted approximately 80 percent of the total popu-
162 lation of the Johns Island township in 1940, only 41 percent of the
island residents were black in 1970, and that ratio remained relatively
stable through 1980.[16]

As the data in Table 2 indicate, Wadmalaw and Edisto, com-

A, [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

161 Table 3. Population Projection for Charleston County

	1970	*1975*	*1980*	*1985*	*1990*	*1995*
Edisto Island	1,374	1,170	1,120	1,110	1,150	1,190
James Island	24,197	25,944	29,280	33,064	36,890	40,450
Johns Island	7,530	8,853	10,483	12,016	13,469	14,999
McClellanville*	4,094	3,867	3,814	3,905	3,994	4,125
Wadmalaw Island	2,024	1,900	2,150	2,250	2,450	2,650

Source: BCD Council of Governments *Regional Housing Market Analysis*, 1979, p. 21.
*McClellanville is not a Sea Island. It is included here because it is a coastal city that has always had a concentration of African-Americans, most of whom do speak a variety of Gullah.

563 Johns, Kiawah, and Seabrook, have undergone significant population
161 changes in the recent past (see Table 3).

Economy

433 In the past, the Sea Islanders depended on agriculture and their
241 natural environment for survival. Without a doubt, the new job opportunities brought to some of the islands by industry and commerce will
(178) affect this pattern. In fact, current census data indicate that farming is already being abandoned in exchange for more lucrative livelihoods.
(464) By 1970 only 10 percent of the people on Johns Island and 15 percent of those on Wadmalaw were farmers. The figures for farm laborers were 13.4 percent on Johns, 20.8 percent on Wadmalaw. The Kiawah
464 Island Company painted a glowing picture of the employment opportunities that the resort could offer to area residents, estimating that
177 "operating employment for the resort would range from 476 to 511 in 1976, increase yearly to a range of 1,227 to 1,473 by 1980, and climb to an incredible 4,034 to 4,458 jobs by 1990." Although the company's figures have proved thus far to be somewhat optimistic, the resort development has indeed provided jobs for Sea Islanders:

> On Kiawah Island, blacks from Johns, Wadmalaw, and other areas have recently received both construction and operations jobs, although the skill levels these jobs involve are either fairly high or fairly low. Kiawah estimates, for example, that in August of 1976

464 •177 there were 181 construction workers on their island, and 38 or 40 percent of those were black, although all did not come from the immediate area. In the area of operations employment, 111 of 250 total workers on Kiawah or 44 percent were from Johns, Wadmalaw, or Yonges in April of 1976. These are startup operations, but the same trends can be observed on Hilton Head Island. At the Hilton Head Company, 37 of the 103 workers are minorities, as compared to 40 percent local residents as employees for the local Holiday Inn.[19]

434 735 Despite these improved job opportunities, the Sea Islands remain among areas listed by the BCD Council of Governments as economically distressed. For example, Edisto Island had a 1970 median family income of about $2,500. Approximately 60 percent of Edisto's population reported incomes below the 1970 poverty level. Of the 2,024 residents on Wadmalaw Island, 1,053 had incomes below the poverty level; the median income for Wadmalaw was $4,700.[20]

735 464 871 The high poverty levels reported for the Sea Island areas are related not so much to the employment opportunities in the area as to a lack of skills that prevents the islanders from applying for well-paid jobs. In 1980 more than 50 percent of the respondents in one study undertaken on Wadmalaw, Johns, and James islands had less than a ninth-grade education (though there are many permanent inhabitants of the Sea Islands who hold university and professional degrees). Members of the labor force in 1980 were employed as unskilled private household workers, maintenance workers, clerks, food service workers, unskilled hospital personnel, and the like.[21]

423 175 567 As noted, the agricultural patterns have changed over the years. When the Indians had been driven out of the islands, the land was owned partly by tenant black farmers and partly by white planters whose acreage was worked by African slaves. Immediately after the Civil War, only blacks could buy land in the region. Thousands of acres had been left by planters when they fled from the Union troops. They could not buy back the land because they could not pay the federal direct tax imposed by the Washington government, and even if they had been financially able to pay the taxes, they could not have made their way through the Union camps to do so. The federal government and various societies in the North wishing to befriend the blacks wanted the island property to go to the free slaves. To meet this inten-

463 because the remoteness of the islands means that most of the homes have
to be built by the islanders themselves.

285 The Sea Island crafts—jewelry, pottery, fans, baskets—often reflect
African styles. Basketry is one of the dominant crafts of the region,
178 and one of the oldest crafts of African origin in the United States.
463 The baskets were originally made for practical purposes: winnowing
rice, carrying clothing, cradling infants, fanning, sorting foods. These
were called work baskets and were made of sturdy weaves and such
materials as bulrushes and palmetto butts. While the basket weavers
still make work baskets, they find that most customers are more interested
in their "show baskets," which are lighter and more colorful
[531] but less sturdy and sometimes less expensive to make. The show baskets
have various designs, ranging from a tiny candle holder to a gigantic
woven bin. Whereas the work baskets are relics of the African
[177] utility traditions, the show pieces, including purses, vases, and glasses
trays, show European influences and are usually decorative in intent.
Within recent years the basket weavers of Mt. Pleasant, a town on the
South Carolina coast, have gained fame for their skills with the traditional
designs. Their baskets are displayed in educational centers and
museums of art throughout the United States and elsewhere, and are
purchased by art collectors the world over as survivals of an ancient
African craft.

285 Various observers have compared the baskets of the South Carolina
coast with their African counterparts. According to one knowledgeable
171 collector, there are strong technical links in weave pattern, design, and
final product between the Carolina flat and fanner baskets and those of
Nigeria, Togo, Benin, and Ghana.[38] The Sea Island coiling technique,
the manner of stitching, and the pattern of functional use within an
agricultural framework have been likened to the style of Senegal,
though coiling, an old and widespread technique, is not by itself sufficient
to identify an African source.[39] Given that similarities in technique
and style may be misleading, the deciding factor in comparisons
is the cultural milieu of which the baskets are a part. Because Africans
[178] were transplanted from the Gold Coast to America, and because Sea
Island African-Americans continue to make baskets that are so like the
African counterparts that it is almost impossible to differentiate them,
it seems reasonable to accept the fact of a historical link.[40]

285 Children, both boys and girls, are taught basketmaking along with
868 the other traditional skills. Boys and men most often gather mate-

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 21]

439 437 twenty-dollar bill from his wallet, tore it in half, gave her half of it, and told her he would give her the other half when she finished weaving the coasters. He left thinking that he had indeed made a bargain. Feeling somewhat dismayed by the whole procedure, I asked her how she could afford to make the coasters for only twenty dollars if it took her a week to weave them. She smiled slyly and said she could make them in a matter of hours.

Social Structure

177 156 The ways of the Sea Islanders, as I have said, offer valuable insights into an Afro-American culture which has had relatively little contact with the customs of the white majority until very recent years. According to one group of researchers, the unusual circumstances which created the culture also "created a unique psyche for Blacks in the Sea Island area":

> We have seen their consequences in a number of ways in our research. We constantly encounter elderly Blacks whose knowledge of and acquaintance with whites is very limited. They have not had to interact with whites or the majority culture in the same way as Blacks in the other parts of this country. Many of them have a fierce kind of pride and a lack of fear which is seldom seen in other places. The self-doubt and sense of inadequacy and inferiority often cited as characteristic of the Black psyche are not found to the same degrees in our Sea Island research.[42]

596 Their preserved traditions, too, set the Sea Islanders apart from other Americans, black or white. The extended family is the norm in
596 621 the Sea Islands. Most islands are sectioned off into family communities, where all members of one family, their close relatives, and people remotely related live or have a right to live as long as they can satisfactorily show evidence of kinship. Land is not normally sold to
596 423 family members but is passed on through an unwritten contract called "heir's land"; if land *is* sold to relatives, the charge is only one dollar to fulfill "legal tenets of the state."[43]

621 602 (423) Land ownership is closely aligned with kinship, and kinship is the primary social factor necessary for acceptance into island communities. One must be born, reared, and have a known family history on a

538 (201) monkey from the ground far below (see "The Buzzard and the Monkey" in Chapter 3), the audience shares the imbalance and giddiness that the monkey feels. With varying degrees of animation, the teller can, like the writer, hypnotize his listeners and compel them to suspend any disbelief and fully participate in the events of the tale. But unlike the written word, which can be enjoyed in solitude, whenever and for however long the reader may wish, effective oral presentation is dependent on many factors that are peripheral to the tale itself. The occasion on which a tale is told, the audience to which it is told, and the style and technique of the person doing the telling, among other factors, cannot be ignored in attempting to read written versions of tales which are meant to be presented orally. These external forces are as much a part of oral literature as character development and tightly knit plot are of written literature.

The Setting

538 • 177 The Sea Island tradition has been to tell tales (called "lies" by the islanders) as a form of entertainment. The advent of bridges and electricity, however, has brought about significant changes in the occasions for telling folktales. On more remote islands storytelling is still a common practice, and it is still fairly easy to get a "telling" started. On the more industrialized islands television, with its talking pictures, has all but eliminated the need for oral literature as a form of entertainment. Yet, given the choice, most children seem to favor human contact with a person who really knows how to perform a tale over being entertained by television.

538 517 (177) In Africa and on the Sea Islands folktelling is an informal social event with no set place for telling or listening to tales. Any place where people often congregate to talk, or just to sit and listen, is a good place for a telling to begin. I collected some tales under trees, in open fields, riding in the back of pickup trucks, and while shark fishing. Others I obtained at island stores, around fire sites, at juke joints, in front of fireplaces, on front porches, and down on the creek banks. I heard still others in the comfort and privacy of the tellers' homes. All but the last were places where people congregated and the teller had enough people for an audience response.

On rainy days, which are prevalent on the islands owing to their

592 mealtimes and then returned to her own home. Since her death, his
593 granddaughter has continued the practice.

Another elderly friend and informant often sat in the hallway of his
538 shanty, with the front and back doors open to let the breeze flow
through the house, and told of Ber Rabbit and times past in vivid detail.
Sometimes it seemed that Ber Rabbit was indeed a real character
to him, one he had actually encountered and greeted on his many journeys
down Sea Island paths.

538 The Sea Island children are aware of the "old-time stories" such as
those about Ber Rabbit and his many companions, but most under the
177 age of twelve told me stories that they had learned in school, and not
those characteristic of the Sea Island tradition. Television and improved educational facilities account in part for this change. However, the skill in telling and the ability to retain the old-time stories appear to be related to the degree of modernization of the island. On the more remote islands, including Wadmalaw and Daufuski, many children are avid and skillful storytellers in the old tradition.

538 Nonetheless, few Sea Island children between the ages of eight and
twelve can match the skill and intricate detail in description that the
857 Igbo, Yoruba, and Ibebio children display in captivating an audience
171 and unraveling a tale. Though color television is a common sight in
Nigerian cities like Lagos, Aba, Owerri, Calabar, and Eket, the village children are far less likely to have access to television or radio. As would be expected, these children are far more expert in the art of telling a story than even Nigerian city children, probably because village children are still gathered and told stories frequently as a form of entertainment.

Anytime was a good time for the African children to tell stories.
538 But, as on the Sea Islands, the best stories were told in the late evening
517 around the fire sites when a good group had come together to relax and
461 be entertained after the activities of the day were ended.

The Audience

596 Today, as noted earlier, the extended family is still a practiced tradition on the Sea Islands. The inhabitants, like their West African forebears, seem to be communal people. They live in close proximity

159 539 expression has meaning, so does the absence of movement. Though Mr. Oree held himself nearly still, making gestures only to emphasize a point in an episode, he held his audience captive through story after story.

The language Mr. Oree used is characteristic of contemporary Gullah speech on Wadmalaw Island. He did not get formal education beyond the tenth grade, and he has no desire for social prestige on the island. Thus he has felt little if any need to adapt his speech to conform to that of the more affluent, better-educated, rising social class. In his [177] tales one finds the influence of outside social forces in some of the words used, but much of the content, structure, and language of the tales remain unquestionably Gullah, and most probably African in origin.

159 *Mr. Henry Gibbs*, one of the oldest members of his community, is now approximately one hundred. Until recent years he was always an active member of his church. He is a fairly well-educated man, reads and writes very well, can see well enough to plow a garden each year with his favorite mule, but can hear only when he takes a "notion" to do so. He is always serious and majestic in manner and appearance. Likewise, his oratory is always on matters he feels to be grave, profound, historical, and factual. He will tolerate no discussions of trivia. He told me that he participated in the Marcus Garvey movement and that he can remember his parents talking about "slavery and the 'buckra' [white man] as good as yesterday." He claims to know every family on Wadmalaw Island and most of those on adjoining islands. He is held in grand esteem and awe by his family, friends, and neighbors. Mr. [592] Henry's life-style is somewhat unusual: he keeps all of his belongings in his shanty, located centrally to his wife's home and to his children's and grandchildren's homes. He prefers the solitude of his own house, he says, so that he can think and reflect without being disturbed by [171] noises from his family. His choice is reminiscent of the separate living quarters characteristic in traditional Igbo, Yoruba, and other West African cultures.

159 539 Mr. Henry's narrative style is more descriptive than some Sea Islanders', but this distinction is perhaps related to the subject matter of his narratives, primarily legends and historical accounts, the nature of which requires a certain seriousness in presentation. This personal

2: Jones-Jackson L-5 (1973-1986) 1987
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

Conclusion

538 Folktales, like languages, are not immutable. They are constantly changing: the plots vary, the characters change, new names are substituted for old ones, and the language of the tales generally takes on the flavor and style characteristic of the era; any given speaker may rearrange, improvise, or improve a plot, episode, or character to his own specifications. 538 On the Sea Islands the teller may add such things as telephones, highways, automobiles, and even televisions in contemporary tales, yet these innovations are set within the framework of traditional themes. •177 In the minds of some island youngsters, for example, Ber Rabbit may now live in a house instead of his traditional hollow in the briar patch. But plots remain essentially the same: Ber Rabbit still tricks Ber Wolf, but instead of returning to his den in the hollow, he returns to his house in or near a briar patch.

538 While the speakers may vary in their individual styles of delivery, there remain very distinct features characteristic of Sea Island folk telling:

The teller

1. will usually tease his audience when he has them thoroughly involved in his tale by pretending to forget or pretending that he will finish his tale at a later time;
2. will usually ask rhetorical questions of given members, and will expect one member or all members of his audience to respond;
3. will usually try to make his delivery as dynamic and emotional as possible through modulations in the pitch or tone of voice;
4. will usually speak louder and more rapidly when he begins to close his narration;
5. will usually make his closing as dramatic as possible;
6. will usually give a tale a moral if one is not already inherent;
7. will usually use a range of kinesic movements or gestures to help describe the events of a tale.

The audience

1. will usually respond or reply to questions or cues given by a speaker;

197 because it is believed to have resulted from the merger of English and languages used along the West African coast, including Ewe, Fante, Efik, Ibebio, Igbo, Yoruba, Twi, Kongo, and Mandinka. Since many African slaves were also brought from the Angola region of West Africa, some researchers suggest that Angola is a possible source for the word *Gullah*; *Geechee* may be derived from the Gidzi, a language and people in the Kissy country of Liberia.[1]

197 178 •177 The isolation without a doubt contributed much to the perpetuation of Gullah as the language of the Sea Islands, but it can be credited with achieving even more than that. Growing up as a black majority almost free from outside social influences, such as racial prejudice characteristic of the white-dominated society in the inland parts of the United States, undoubtedly affected the attitudes and perceptions of the islanders, to the extent that few of them wish to leave the islands today. Lorenzo Dow Turner found as late as 1949 that some islanders had never been to the mainland.[2] With improved bridges and roadways, most have easy access to and from the islands; however, several of the elderly informants for this study reported that they had not left their island in at least forty years.

191 829 823 Today, as I have indicated, the islanders are still very private people and will often guard the secrets of their culture just as they make attempts to guard their language. When I asked some Charlestonian informants why they supposed the islanders speak the way they do, they gave this interesting account:

> Francis: Why they speak the way they does?
> Jean: Why they speak the way they do?
> Francis: Oh, I don't know. I think it's [because] they used to use that pump water long ago.[3]
> Jean: No-o-o-o. I don't think it has anything to do with the water. I mean, the water do taste different from the city water. But . . .
> Francis: I know it's different.
> Jean: I really don't think it has anything to do with [the water]. I think it's just, maybe it just the fact that they is isolated more than we are. You know, and . . . ah . . . most people over there just content to be left alone. . . . They don't see many people that . . . ah . . . speak anything different or learn anything different. And they are content with their life, you

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 135]

Present-Day Gullah

197 Since the early 1920s Gullah has been known to vary regionally; recent studies by Irma Cunningham, Patricia Nichols, Charles Joyner, Salikoko Mufwene, Ian Hancock, and me, conducted in different areas of the Sea Islands and the adjacent coast indicate that there are still distinct varieties.[8] Minor details such as consistent use of the pronoun *e*, which is applied to both sexes, and a distinctive fricative "fizzing" sound on words beginning with *w* would go unnoticed by casual observers. However, they permit the islanders to detect when one is from a different island, when one is a total outsider, and when one is trying to talk "proper," in the negative sense of the word. In fact, during my first few years on the islands, I learned that I should not
(123) try to pass myself off as an islander by an attempt to imitate the Sea Island language. While I may have had the syntax right, I was never able to perfect the accent, and it is the stress and intonation that give one away. When I asked the islanders how they were able to detect such small differences, I was often told, "I ain't know how I de know, but I de know." And they did know.

197
• 177 The outside pressures now exerted on the Gullah-speaking communities in the coastal areas of Georgia and South Carolina have created the general conditions that David DeCamp describes for post-creole speech communities (i.e., communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with a standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and new educational programs and other infusions from the outside have broken down the formerly rigid social structure enough to cause social mobility and to motivate large numbers of Gullah speakers to modify their speech in the direction of standard English.[9] Given this sociolinguistic situation, the Sea Islands offer an ideal opportunity to investigate linguistic convergence and change.

197 Before proceeding further, it is important to clarify several facts about Gullah in order to distinguish it from the speech of other black Americans. First, whereas Gullah is a creole, inland black speech is defined as a dialect of English, that is, as a variant of the English language peculiar to a particular region or social context. A dialect of any given language is similar to that language in phonology, vocabulary, and syntax; such differences as may exist often result from regional or social variations, and most dialectal variations present few

197 major comprehension barriers to speakers of the standard language. On the other hand, while a creole language also results from social and regional variations, a creole is similar to the primary language mainly in vocabulary; it differs in features of syntax and phonology to the extent that the creole and the primary language may be mutually unintelligible.

197 Secondly, despite the common West African ancestry of speakers
of black English dialect, Gullah, and other creoles, isolation has tended
● 177 to protect the Africanisms in the islanders' speech. As noted in Chapter
178 1, blacks are still in a majority on most of the Sea Islands and still
enjoy the effects of both isolation and majority status. The impact of outside forces is not yet intense enough in most places to modify greatly the traditional, socially cohesive customs. And Gullah still thrives as the language of familiarity in the Sea Island communities. Even the few white families that have long made their homes on the islands speak Gullah, and readily admit to speaking it. Most native-born white islanders say they learned Gullah as a first language from their parents, neighbors, and island playmates.

199 The third and perhaps most important distinction between Gullah
and black dialect is in vocabulary. True, the lexicon of Gullah, like that
192 of black dialect, is composed primarily of English words. Even so,
there are a host of African-derived words in Gullah, some of which are generally unknown to inland black speakers, for example:

gula, "pig": Kongo
goober, "peanut": Kimbundu
gumbo, "okra": Tshiluba
gumbi, "medicinal weed": Bambara
heh, "yes": Vai
hoodoo, "bad luck": Hausa
yambi, "yam": Vai
chigger, "small flea": Wolof
juk, juky, "disorderly": Wolof
cush, "bread," "cake": Hausa
nana, "elderly woman," "grandmother": Twi
nansi, "spider": Twi
tote, "to carry": Kikongo
chicabod, "seesaw": Mandingo
unu, "you": Igbo
yent, "to lie": Umbundu
pinto, bento, "coffin": Temne
biddy, "small chicken": Kongo
buckra, "white man": Ibebio
de, "to be": Igbo
eh, "yes": Igbo
ashantie, "house": Ga[10]

551 Most of the islanders still have two kinds of given names: one used within the Sea Island community and one used in outside transactions. Mozi, Misy, Maima, Kutsey, Kisi, Lunza, Masa, Yatta, and Chineque

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 139]

Conclusion

539 [di lɔd ẽ bɪnə muβ mi mɔŋtɪn
bət i bɪn gɪβ mi siçɹɛt ɸə klɒɪəm]

God didn't move my mountain,
but he gave me strength to climb it.

177 178 During my search for Africanisms in the Sea Island culture over the past ten years. I have seen that some of the old traditions are dying out while others remain intact. Each year I see something different, hear more old tales, and learn another old word. It is hard to measure the precise impact of new pressures on the islands. But the islanders are beginning to lose their geographical isolation, and they are thus being forced to alter a culture which has existed and served them well since the first importation of African slaves to the island shores.

177 178 596 Some elements are resistant to change. The extended family is remaining intact because the islanders are still in a majority. Though their communities are being diluted by outsiders, their family norms are less open to invasion. The islands are still sectioned off into family communities where all persons remotely related to the family have the right to live. This housing tradition will be difficult to disrupt, though it may be easier to displace. The pressure of nearby resort areas has encouraged land take-overs at some spots, and taxation and other legal means have been used to force homeowners to leave (see Appendix 4).A However, when the islanders are obliged to move, most often they relocate at a place where relatives offer them a piece of land on which to build. Thus the cohesiveness of the family structure continues to prevail.

A, [For Appendix 4, see Category 423, pp. 165-168--Analyst]

Appendix 4

The Land Question

423 [178] As the islanders often put it, "Everything change up now." One of the major areas of change in recent years has been in the use and ownership of land in the islands. "Primarily," comments Ed Brown, an attorney practicing in Charleston County who grew up on Wadmalaw,

> the land is changing hands because history has created a division between those people who own the land and those people who want to buy land. And if a developer comes in here with forty thousand dollars for ten acres of land, which might appear at first blush to be a lot of money, the landowner is perhaps inclined to take the forty thousand dollars and part with title to the land. That happens. I don't know that that is a bad thing. I think that what it does do is it creates a problem for the person who has sold the land, because if you are not sophisticated in terms of handling the forty thousand dollars, then you lose it rather quickly, whereas the land would be there forever.[1]

The relationship of black people to land in general has considerable significance. Various studies and reports trace the origins of many of the current domestic ills of the United States to the surge of southern blacks into urban areas as the rural southern economy found that under existing social arrangements, it could no longer employ large numbers of small farmers, sharecroppers, tenants, and unskilled farm laborers. In the 1960s alone, more than 1.3 million blacks left the South, and during the previous decade the number was even greater.[2]

423 • 177 The population that remains behind on the islands is having to adjust to the incoming population of resort residents, as well as resort development for tourism. Developers have not been responsive to local needs. Seabrook was the first of the islands to be opened up as a resort.

423 •177 The original owner of the island, one of the major church denominations, sold it to a group of developers, who in turn sold it to a second group, from New York. No input from the community was requested, and a great deal of hostility resulted. When developers came to Kiawah to create a much larger resort area, they expressed readiness to meet community needs and asked for a list. The time available to come up with this list was brief, but island leaders working with Bill Jenkins, a long-time activist in land issues, did manage to set out six or seven mostly minor suggestions. "We did it in good faith," notes Jenkins. "I think we were more in good faith than they were, because some of those things we are still trying to get."

"I remember as a little boy," says Ed Brown, "that you could purchase perhaps an acre of land for two hundred dollars. Today that's just unheard of. So the very basic thing that gives the islands their wealth, namely, the property, is increasing in value, but we need to develop a methodology by which that can be properly managed and the profits therefrom, if there are to be profits, channeled back into the islands for their development." He adds, "I see good things. I'm an eternal optimist. I think that the future will prove to be very fruitful . . . if we can learn from the mistakes." Yet he does not deny that there have been mistakes, for instance, the absence of "a working rapport between the people who operate these resorts and the people who in fact live on these islands, and who have lived there for quite some time."

423 311 177 Land is being taken out of production. Acreage once used to grow food is now restricted and controlled by high taxes and county regulations implemented in response to development. Small livestock farmers located next to tracts under new ownership may be pressured to sell out if their activities seem incompatible with the projects of the developers. Lands are lost, too, when people unused to record keeping lose tax receipts and forget to pay yearly bills, or when land descends to heirs who have moved away and have no interest in it.

423 177 Bill Jenkins has provided an illustration of what can happen when developers are more interested in a piece of property than its legal owners:

> There's seventy-nine acres of land down at Johns Island airport. . . . Developers . . . did some research and found out who were some of the people who were involved in that property. [One of

423 •177 them] found a wino in New York City and just walked up to him and said, "I heard you own some property on Johns Island." The guy thought he was kidding because he had never been to Johns Island. So he just started laughing. [The developer] said, "I'm serious. You get a witness and come with me and I will give you five hundred dollars for what you own." So this guy, you know, he thought Santa Claus. So he got one of his friends and they went downtown, and he had everything probated, signed it off, and the people came down here and created all kinds of problems for the rest of the family. Eventually, they had to end up selling that land . . . because with this property, when the families are so large, most of the time you can't even get all of the family together, so they could agree who's going to get the swampland, who's going to get the house, who's going to get the waterfront. . . . But the court could sell all of the land and divide the money equally. And so, when this land developer bought this land . . . , he came down here and he wanted his portion. . . . He is now one of the heirs. But [he and the family] cannot agree on which piece. . . . Then he goes back to the court and says, "We can't reach an agreement." And if you can't reach an agreement, then the court will come in and put it up for sale.

423 871 Obviously, the question of land retention is directly tied to the education of the landowners about the legal responsibilities involved. For more than twenty years, groups have been operating in that interest throughout the Sea Islands and the rural South. In 1970 Professor Robert Browne, who was then studying the loss of black land in the South for the Black Economic Research Center in New York (he is now at Howard University), was able to obtain a million dollars from a private donor to organize the National Emergency Land Fund. The fund has focused on educating black landowners about their responsibilities, helping them express themselves, putting land into production, and resisting aggressive development.

871 [873] The fund has worked in conjunction with the Penn Center on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, one of the oldest institutions established for the education of blacks in the United States. Penn School began by teaching newly freed slaves and continued as the only high school for black children on the island. In 1948 the bulk of its programs were transferred to the county public school system, but most of

871 [657] its community outreach activities were continued. The Penn Center, currently directed by Emory Campbell, acts as an information and referral source, provides such social services as visiting families to help them select food crops, and educates in matters including use of land and landownership.

871 657 423 Bill Jenkins was working for Penn Community Services in the early 1970s when he helped put together a program called Black Land Services, in response to a number of requests for help in retaining ownership of land. He is now active in the South Carolina Land Owners' Association, an offshoot of the National Association of Land Owners, which presently operates only in Mississippi and Alabama. Faced with serious cutbacks in funding and manpower, the South Carolina Land Owners' Association is not able to be as active as it once was, but Jenkins and co-worker Joe McDermott continue their educational activities in the islands on a reduced scale.

• 177 The desire of the dominant society to reclaim the Sea Islands, though shortsighted, nonetheless seems likely to prevail. As Ed Brown puts it, "The industry is there." The displacement that has already occurred will have long-term repercussions. "The social consequences of the pressures from development on the Sea Islands will be seen another five to ten to fifteen years," notes Emory Campbell. "It's subtle now but we at Penn Center see it as a very serious problem—serious today as it is going to be serious in another ten to fifteen years."

The islanders' ineffectiveness in resisting the often reckless advances of developers must be laid at the door of the very insularity that for so long protected their culture. Adherence to traditional ways has by and large robbed them of the ability to respond to the intrusion with equal and opposite force. The price they are paying now is one more legacy of slavery.

197 192 10. The African derivations of these words are from Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect.*

114 551 11. For a critical appraisal of Turner's methodology see P. E. H. Hair, "Sierra Leone Items in the Gullah Dialect of American English," *African Language Review* 4 (1965): 79–84.

12. DeCamp, Foreword to Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, pp. vii–viii.

177 192 13. For a detailed discussion of the processes involved in language contact see Talmy Givón, "Prolegomena to Any Creology" (Department of Linguistics, University of California, Los Angeles, Mimeo, 1973).

121 14. According to Wolfram (personal communication), the "matrix of cruciality" refers to linguistic features that are important to control in situations where one would be expected to use a form of standard English.

193 15. For a fuller syntactical analysis of Gullah than follows here, see Cunningham, "Syntactic Analysis." See Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," for a full representation of creole features in context.

16. See Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 225.

[113] 17. See Dietrich Westerman and M. A. Bryan, *The Languages of West Africa* London: Oxford University Press, 1952).

18. Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect*, p. 211.

19. See Nichols, "Linguistic Change in Gullah," for a detailed discussion and historical analysis of the complementizer *for*.

(113) 20. J. L. Dillard, *Black English* (New York: Random House, 1972).

Appendix 1

113 1. Jackson, Slaughter, and Blake, "The Sea Islands as a Cultural Resource."

Appendix 3

194 113 1. For a full discussion of the phonemes in Gullah, see Jones-Jackson, "The Status of Gullah," and Turner, *Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect.*

Appendix 4

128 126 1. All quotations in this appendix are from the film documentary *When Roots Die*, produced by me in conjunction with WHMM TV at Howard University and the South Carolina ETV network. I owe special thanks to Charles Sessoms, who helped to write and who directed the film. Likewise, I am indebted to Henry Cauthens, director of the South Carolina ETV network, for providing a crew (Patrice Abrams, Jimmy Dinkins, and Joe Bowie) to undertake the filming in South Carolina; and to Edward Hawthorne, dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and Arnold Wallace, general manager of WHMM TV, Howard University, for providing the funds.

660 2. Robert Browne, founder of the National Emergency Land Fund and research scholar for the Black Economic Research Center (personal communication).

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128 gest ways in which Gullahs interpreted Christianity, and how Africanity was integrated into Christianity, into attitudes toward life, death, and the supernatural. I do not argue for direct, fixed, or unchanging transmission of African religion and culture. Yet persistence of traditional beliefs, embedded in a recently created society, is not remarkable. Nor [177] should we assume that traditional African customs and beliefs necessarily disintegrated before Christian and white cultural icons.[32] Still my aim is to demonstrate African-Gullah adaptability in their interaction with another major cultural form, and their capacity for change and meaningful continuity given the realities of new situations.

127 I rely heavily upon primary sources in this book, although my discussion on African culture and cosmology is an exception. Here the empha-
128 sis is on secondary material. This was necessary since I aim to fuse history and anthropology into ethnohistory. It was not always possible to obtain sources directly from the Gullahs. Yet I have tried to articulate their social history by using sources at least derived from the Gullahs. Thus, missionary reports and sketches, spirituals, folk practices and customs, diaries, church minutes, and similar types of records are used extensively. Sources which support interpretations and historical depictions of white attitudes toward religious instruction are also mainly primary. And whenever applicable and possible, I attempted to incorporate current historiographical trends into this study.

Prologue

131 The coastal region of the South Carolina Lowcountry, bounded on the
north by Georgetown and on the south by Port Royal and St. Helena
Sound, was the land of the Gullah slave population. Bordering on these
coastal lowlands, stretching out into the arms of the sea, halfway between
Charleston, South Carolina and Savannah, Georgia are a fringe of
fertile islands. The largest of these islands are Port Royal, Paris, Ladies,
Hilton Head, and St. Helena.[1] Here indigo and the once famous long
248 staple cotton were cultivated by the most isolated Gullah slaves, who
249 also created and maintained a distinct, imaginative, and original African-
567 American culture. Because their isolation precluded direct exposure to
177 mass Euro-American influences, Sea Island Gullahs offer evidence of significant
178 combinations of traditional retentions, American acculturation,
and intergroup socialization.

101 The name "Gullah" is generally believed to be a shortened form of
Angola. Africans from the Kongo-Angola region, Bantu-speaking peoples,
175 were imported in large numbers during Carolina's early colonial
567 history.[2] As early as 1742, the *South Carolina Gazette* advertised for a
runaway slave called "Golla Harry." One of Denmark Vesey's coconspirators, "Gullah Jack," was reportedly born in Angola. An entry of the Charleston City Council for 1822 refers to "Gullah Jack" and his "Gullah or Angola Negroes." The Vesey trial record, however, simply refers to Jack as an African. Winifred Vass, in *The Bantu Speaking Heritage of the United States*, points out that the ruler of the Mbundu nation in Central Africa was called the Ngola, from which the Portuguese named the colony. Vass suggests that this name was used by Europeans to refer to

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maintained by slaves' industry while the masters "live in the towns in 175
opulency and ease" riding out to the "farms" once in a fortnight "as any 567
urgent occasion requires, sometimes taking their ladies with them and
children in chairs so that there is not the appearance of . . . business."[39]

The first census return for the new nation reported a population of
18,753 in Beaufort District (St. Helena, St. Luke, and Prince William [162]
Parishes). Of this number, 14,236 were slaves and 153 were free blacks.
The resort town of Beaufort contained about thirty houses, and the majority of the population was scattered over the islands and on remote mainland plantations. Timothy Ford, a Northerner whose sister married into the DeSaussure family of South Carolina visited the region during that time. He commented on the absenteeism, the superfluity of servants, and the idleness of Southerners who called themselves planters, "yet know little about the process and art of planting . . . all is committed to overseers and drivers." Of religious life, Ford noted that the Episcopalian Church was the "preeminent and fashionable mode of worship," but also observed that:

> . . . the spirit had not lately visited this parish; the shattered and forlorn condition of this church gave but too much room to question their zeal; and the few that attended it (about fifty whites) to doubt the ardor of their devotion.[40]

A St. Helena planter's wife, Abigail Capers, wrote a friend in 1791 that 175
there were about seventy families on the Island, forty of whom were
eminent planters "with strong attachments to each other." The only
church, she wrote, was a tiny Episcopal chapel of ease. Sundays were
for the most part not spent in church but among "genteel company" on
various plantations and engaged in a variety of "amusements." It was a (567)
simple but elegant life where "nothing is so much coveted as the pleasure
of possessing many slaves . . . happiness is confined within the narrow
limits of a plantation with a great many slaves."[41]

In the early nineteenth century Baptist churches were still tiny unpretentious 175
houses of worship with no slave galleries, although personal 567
servants did attend services. White memberships were so small that no 394
specific seating arrangements were needed—blacks occupied the back of
the churches and whites sat in the front. Furthermore, even though revivals [177]
were conducted in the Beaufort area in the early 1800s, church
rolls indicate no significant gain in black membership. Not until 1817
did the Beaufort Baptist Church have its first extension to admit galleries

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175 Gullahs were "easily excited," and claimed that it was necessary "to instruct
797 them in distinguishing between animal feeling and a real work of
grace." Methodists frowned upon Gullah paroxysms, not viewing these
152 as manifestations of Christian fervor but as non-Christian or "natural"
786 means of expressive outlet, born of older traditions. In any case, black
impetuosity had to be eradicated just as the violins and banjos had to be
silenced. Generally speaking, Methodism among the Gullahs can be partly
described as E. P. Thompson implicitly viewed it among British workers—a
religion of the heart that sometimes attempted to stifle spontaneity
of the mind and soul.[69] Slaves were rarely allowed to be themselves in
the presence of Methodist emissaries. This fact, coupled with Gullah
preference for a presentation of religion (or a religious presentation) in
more original and familiar terms, lost the Methodist church many black
converts.

175 Acceptance of Christianity by the Gullahs, as presented by their
797 Methodist instructors, was more of a process of coming to terms than a
total commitment. Christianity was incorporated into, but did not immediately
supersede, all of their previously held beliefs and practices.
The missionaries realized this, reported it with disappointment, and hoped
for a better day. Such was the case with the adult generation of Gullahs
in the 1830s, and this continued to be a major factor in the 1840s as
175 well.[70] On the isolated Sea Islands a certain Old World cultural similitude
contributed to the retention of communal and cultural components.
177 Traditions inspired by Africanity and infused with Gullah folk Christi-
178 anity remained identifiable well past the antebellum years. Nevertheless,
Africanisms outlasting the capture, the long march, and the culminating
humiliation of foreign servitude had to be preserved in a vestigial state.
In addition, commingling of various ethnic groups indicates that cultural
diffusion was also an important factor as native ceremonies and customs
were renewed and exchanged. Therefore, what was retained of African
religion and spirituality was culled from the customs, beliefs, and practices
of a number of West African peoples. Thus Gullah-English dialect
[198] may be a pidgin influenced mainly by Tshi (Gold Coast), KiKongo (Kongo-Angola),
and Mande (Upper Guinea) linguistic patterns. But Gullah
spiritual and communitarian features bear strong resemblance to traditions
of Upper Guinea and BaKongo peoples. When the Methodists ar-
175 rived among the Gullahs, they probably found a syncretism of African
797 customs and practices sprinkled with snatches of Protestantism borrowed

793 him for many years insisted that his "wisdom" and "vision" were "God's free gift" for a service of faith and hope that "Prophet" Polite had rendered his people. In old age, as a free man, he addressed the Praise House congregation probably the same way he did on other occasions throughout the years after slavery. The words of Sam Polite demon-
793 strates that the Gullahs, in freedom as in bondage, viewed their religion
539 as a special gift with a unique essence:

> 771 God done gib de white folks a heap of things, but he ain't forgotten us 'cause He gib us Religion and we have a right to show it out to all de world. De Buckra [white people], deys got de knowing of the whys and hows of religion, but dey ain't never got de feel of it yet. I think God ain't have much respect for no kind of religion without de feeling. De Book say, 'They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth.' There might be some truth in deys-all religion, but there ain't much spirit in a religion that's all in de head.[1]

771 The Gullahs' capacity to maintain psychological and spiritual autonomy in the face of degrading implications of their historical circumstances was usually attributed to their faith. The ostensible basis of this faith was Christianity. Certainly one source of Gullah religion and spirituality is found in Christian example, enabling them to see their enslavement in heroic terms. Yet Gullah roots sprang from an African world view that emphasized affirmation and celebration of human life, with religion representing the highest expression of that existence. Additionally, their African heritage familiarized Gullahs with the power and supremacy of a collective spirit over individual experience. Thus, while planters valued
• [177] religious instruction as a means of manipulating the actions and thinking
of Gullahs, the slaves' discretionary adoption and adaptation of certain
[797] features of Christianity was a way of articulating and manifesting their
common oppression in terms significant for them and also either acceptable or esoteric to slaveholders and missionaries.

175 Most Gullahs cared little about didactic features fundamental to Chris-
797 tianity. And while their exposure to the religion was primarily superficial, their acceptance and reinterpretation was essentially practical, rein-
[177] forcing older traditions. Their limited understanding of Protestantism
[178] was observed by antebellum travelers and Methodist missionaries right
up to the time of civil conflict. Aptitude had nothing to do with the Gullahs' failure to grasp a firmer knowledge of Protestantism. They shrewdly did what was expected of them without actually internalizing

175 177 771 brethren they must be just like birds when the gunner is about, expecting a crack every minute. "Dey ain't neber know what gwine to befal dey, pore black folks must wait and hab faith, . . . Massa laff one day. Ask me if I tink Christ want black nigger in heben. One ting I sure. We'uns gwine to be where de crucify Lord am. And if dat place be Hell, He gwine make it heben for we."[9]

175 771 Gullah religion was not quiescent, nor an enslavement of the mind, despite the "Christian" and long-suffering attitude seemingly responsible for their sensitiveness and lofty, visionary approach toward oppression. Many observers were appalled at what they interpreted as resignation among Sea Island African-Americans. Arthur Sumner wrote from St. Helena Island in 1863, "I am astonished that they should be fit to live after such generations of mere animal life. A higher race would have lost all moral sense." Even one of the Gullahs' staunchest advocates, Elizabeth Botume, believed that "the patience of the freedpeople in sickness was so general and remarkable, it seemed like apathy." If what Botume observed was only resignation, it probably was a function of Gullah affiliation with Christianity. Yet their coping capacity was also possible because of the sense of protection that spiritual association offered, with religious and community membership forging ties that strengthened the Gullahs' resolve. Thomas Wentworth Higginson was surprised to find Gullahs so little demoralized and he accurately attributed this to religion:

> I learned to think that we abolitionists had underrated the suffering produced by slavery among the negroes, but had overrated the demoralization. Or rather, we did not know how the religious temperament of the negroes had checked the demoralization. Yet . . . it must be admitted that this temperament, born of sorrow and oppression, is far more marked in the slave than in the native African.[10]

771 Higginson perceptively realized the lack of "demoralization" wrought by slavery. But the personality and "religious temperament" of Gullahs owed much to a non-Christian tradition, and was not "born of sorrow and oppression" or as foreign to the "native African" as Higginson imagined. As previously suggested, African religion and philosophy emphasized the celebration and affirmation of human life, and within this scheme, while God was the apex of the theory of being, humankind was the center, or pivotal point, of earthly existence. Gullahs were very much a part of this world view. Even though on the conscious level the pillar of their faith rested on their association with Christ, this may have primarily provided Old World ideology with an organized, plausible New

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175 the pledge of freedom won them over, and by January 1863, formation
• 177 of the "First Regiment of South Carolina Volunteers" was complete.[14]

701 Many whites either doubted the African-American slaves' capacity to fight the slaveholders, feared the consequences of an armed black population, or simply expressed racialist convictions in their attitude. But exigencies of war turned slaves into liberators, and black soldiers demonstrated what freedom meant to people in bondage. The "enthusiasm," "alarcrity," and sense of duty among men of the "First South" was reportedly unmatched. Rather than fearful, they were impatient to fight. Their commander, Colonel Higginson, insisted that "braver men never lived." Accustomed to bearing pain, some did not even report injuries after battles. Frequently susceptible to pulmonary disease, some refused to report to sick call unless their officers insisted. Gullah soldiers fought all the more fiercely because of a particular grievance. Blacks were not recognized as soldiers by Confederates, but as fugitive slaves. Thus black soldiers and their white officers fought "with ropes around our necks." Confederates ordered that, if captured, blacks and their officers would suffer a "felon's death." Gullahs were especially sullen when North and South raised truce flags, saluted each other "courteously," exchanged cigars, and negotiated "usually to send over to the enemy, some family of Rebel women." While showing no disrespect in word or deed, according to Higginson, the blacks hated these women "from the bottom of their souls." "Deres no flags ob truce for us," said the Gullahs, contemptuous of such proceedings, "When de Secesh fight de Fus' Souf', he fight in earnest." But Gullahs also fought in earnest. In the words of Sergeant Prince Rivers, former Beaufort slave and coachman, they could, as "men, look our old masters in de face." "Now," he said, "we ain't afraid, if they meet us, to run the bayonet through them."[15]

17 701 In their frequent prayer meetings, Gullah soldiers prayed for victory, mixing "the warlike" with "the pious." They spoke of "a religious army," and a "gospel army." According to Higginson they even "evangelized" the chaplin, who previously was "rather heretic." Higginson found that their "faith," "love of freedom and of their families," together with their sense of pride, combined to "make them do their duty." They were confident in the rightness of their cause and that "God would watch over them." Their religious leaders encouragingly assured them that eternity awaited the fallen hero. When the "First South" prepared for an expe-

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175 796 567 [986] tinctly the scene. The benches had all been taken outside to make a clear floor. The table with the books was shoved into a corner. A brilliant fire of lightwood was blazing in the chimney and a torch of the same hung in a tin bucket in a corner. Under this bucket the leader stood. She was a visitor. She was 50 or 60 years old, black and scrawney, only a few teeth left in her head. She had been singing for hours but still went on like one possessed. Gleaming with perspiration from head to heel—her dress at the bosom thrown wide open her head thrown back eyes closed, teeth prominent, head kerchief loose and hanging arms bare, clapping and shouting with a shrill ringing voice. I can recall in most of the other Negroes each with a different step, individual and characteristic. Some very much in earnest almost reverential, some heavy and stupid and some enjoying the fun. My grandmother's coachman "Sam" particularly, very black, good looking, smart and mischievous. I can recall the gleam of his eyes as he grinned at us in passing and improvised some peculiar contractions for our special benefit.[45]

771 567 • 177 For the Gullahs, then, the Christian experience was a means of communal fulfillment on the individual as well as collective level, and plantation life had aspects of an African village in microcosm. Gullahs attempted to exert control over their environment just as their African forbears had. For Africans it was a hostile natural ambiance that most threatened the group. For slaves it was an oppressive socioeconomic system that challenged their will to develop self-esteem and social cohesion. Gullahs successfully met that challenge and rose above bondage in a spiritual and communal sense. [178] By combining the edifying features of Christianity and African culture and philosophy, they created a practical folk religion that served them well, under the travail of slavery.

> It is impossible to reconcile the mind of the native slave to the idea of living in 567
> a state of perfect equality, and boundless affection with white people. Heaven 777
> will be no heaven to him, if he is not to be avenged of his enemies. I know, from
> experience, that these are fundamental rules of his religious creed; because I 177
> learned them in the religious meetings of the slaves themselves. A favorite and kind master or mistress may now and then be admitted into heaven, but this rather as a matter of favor, due to the intercession of some slave, than as a matter of strict justice to the whites, who will, by no means be of an equal rank with those who shall be raised from the depths of misery, in this world.
>
> The idea of a revolution in the conditions of the whites and the blacks, is the cornerstone of the religion of the latter; and indeed it seems to me, at least, to be quite natural, if not in strict accordance with the precepts of the Bible.[5]

Although the Gullahs did not fear death, they recognized its power; 761
and the passing of one of their number had a profound effect on the
community. As has been noted, Methodist missionaries observed this 777
and often tried to use the drama of death among the Gullahs to "bind
them to the cross."[6] But while the Gullahs' perception of life after death 177
was essentially of Christian origin, many practices associated with the 178
dying and the dead were derived from African antecedents.

When death was expected, the plantation community felt compelled 763
to enter into the spirit of the event and vicariously involve themselves in the death throes of the individual, lest when their time came they have to face the ordeal alone, or the deceased, dissatisfied with the send-off, would return and bring evil. The dying person was surrounded by the community, who offered comfort and support. "We got tuh help him cross de ribber," the Gullahs would say. Friends of the dying were expected to bring gifts even though the sufferer could not use them. Such offerings were usually edibles "tuh taste de mou't," but never flowers. Singing, praying, and pious conversation filled the cabin nightly. It was not a solemn time unless sad or obscure circumstances caused the death, but rather was somewhat cheerful, and the subject of death itself was not neglected. Everyone was expected to hold forth as part of the ritual of coaching the dying person to report a heavenly visit or some other evidence of "dying good." When the sufferer drew the last breath, everyone present gave a loud shriek as notification that another soul "done crossed ober." Many Northern teachers were repulsed at the Gullah "deathwatch":

> This practice of sitting up all night with the dying, H. W. [Harriet Ware] justly enough condemns as "heathenish." "The houses cannot hold them all, of course,

"Hark! from the tomb a doleful sound 567
My ears, attend the cry; 764
Ye living men, come view the ground (533)
Where you must shortly lie."

> . . . A prayer was offered. . . . This concluded the services at the grave. No burial or commital service was read. . . . At a subsequent time, when all the relatives and friends could be brought together a big funeral sermon was preached by some of the antebellum negro preachers.

764 171 The presence of a plantation slave "doctor" is reminiscent of the BaKongo *nganga*, who employed life-affirming *nkisi* to heal and ward off bad medicine or *kindoki*. The charm did not work for the plantation slave, and the large funeral turn-out may represent the people's desire to protect themselves from whatever evil had caused Mary's death as well as to express their respect. Passing the woman's baby back and forth over her coffin was a well-known Gullah graveside custom. "Dead moder will hant de baby," Gullahs explained, and "worry him in his sleep." A similar custom among the BaKongo was women crossing back and forth over the graveside of a woman who died in childbirth, hoping that such a fate would not befall them. Singing at the grave was also part of the BaKongo send-off. The funeral, a lavish affair, would take place when all members of the clan could gather and when enough food could be collected.[13]

771 177 Thus another aspect of Gullah religion was a syncretic blend of belief in the efficacy of Christian salvation, the prevalence of the living dead, and the awesome powers of conjuration. It was sometimes difficult to determine where they believed the most power rested. At any rate, their expression, "Love God and fear the devil" indicates that, as a precautionary measure, they preferred to respect the authority and domain of both. For Gullahs saw no contradiction in being firm proponents of the Baptist faith and protecting themselves against forces of the supernatural as well. In spite of the Gullahs' strong profession of Christianity, Laura Towne (754 755) noted that "They believe in the evil eye, and also in the power of a good eye for healing," and that "they are afraid of being alone at night, or of sleeping alone, for fear 'the hag will ride we.' " A slaveholding South Carolina minister remembered Elihu, a "devout, old creditable deacon" of the church and highly respected exhorter in the slave quarters. 771 789 Upon passing the old man's cabin, the owner observed an inverted horseshoe over the door. Since Elihu's skill as a hostler was well known, the owner

771 789 assumed that the horseshoe was a "professional sign." However, the insignia was instead a charm against supernatural agencies:

> "What is that over your door Elihu?"
> "Dat for witches, Massa."
> "For what?"
> "Witches, Massa. Nebber sleep, no how, widout horseshoe to keep out de witches.[14]

761 177 178 Thus, besides the Christian version of immortality, elements of African tradition also accounted for the Gullahs' attitude toward death, as indeed it did in their attitude about life. As previously stated, existence of spirits of the deceased was not only central to African ontology, but these beings constituted the largest group of religious intermediaries. Hence, Africans viewed death as perhaps the most important rite of passage rather than as the demise of life. Death was a momentous transition, requiring demonstrative evidence that the physical presence of the deceased would be missed. But it was just as necessary to celebrate this passage into the spirit world in a manner that indicated a continued existence. Africans believed that the spirit which survived the body was conscious of all earthly events and had the power to exercise influence over the destiny of the living. Consequently, the death of a clan member was observed with greatest respect and the death commemoration had to be expressed collectively.[15]

769 Ancestors were said to retain their normal human passions and appetites which had to be gratified in death as they had been in life. Ancestors felt hunger and thirst. They became angry or happy depending on
the behavior of their living "children." If neglected, the living dead were
vindictive, but propitious if respected. Just as filial loyalty prevents one
from allowing a parent to go hungry, "so must food be offered to the
000 ancestors." Among the BaKongo, food was put out immediately after
the burial and palm wine poured over the grave. Survivors believed the
deceased would eat the food, and bless those who placed it there.[16]

764 Among the Gullahs, even for one who "died good," the spirit could
not rest if something had been left behind which it desired. It was observed that the Gullahs and other African-Americans placed articles on
newly formed graves. These objects were usually personal belongings,
broken pottery and porcelain, playthings, lighting utensils, objects per-
(567) taining to medicine, food, and water. According to the antebellum mem-

175 541 567 mer slaves, "chiefly colored woman with gay handkerchiefs on their heads, and a sprinkling of men" (since most able-bodied males were in the army). All the blacks reportedly "had the bearing and distinct respectable look they always had on Sundays and holidays." The services began with a prayer. The Emancipation Proclamation was read by William Brisbane, a South Carolinian who freed his slaves before the war. Then the chaplin presented the colors to the regiment—all according to program. After the chaplin's introductory remarks, and just as Higginson "took and waved the flag," but before he began to speak, the "unexpected," and "startling" occurred. A "strong" but "cracked and elderly" male voice was heard. Instantly, two female voices blended in as if by "an impulse too strong to be repressed." They sang:

> My Country, 'tis of thee,
> Sweet land of liberty,
> Of thee I sing!

They went on "verse after verse" as the people on the platform appeared stunned. "It seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed," Higginson wrote. The rest of the blacks joined in and the whites also began, but Higginson motioned the latter to silence. "I never saw anything so electric," he wrote. "It made all other words seem cheap." "Art," wrote Higginson, "could not have dreamed of a tribute to the day of Jubilee . . . history will not believe it . . . tears were everywhere." Corporal Robert Sutton, a favorite of Higginson's, spoke, vowing that no black soldier would rest until all his brothers and sisters were free. "Boys," he vowed, "we will take Christ for our Captain who never lost a battle."[1]

175 567 The moment of freedom, more than any event, bound African-Americans to Christianity. Their deliverance from the house of bondage "by no man,"[2] as they believed, did more to instill faith in Christianity than any doctrines taught by whites.

567 771 177 178 Although religious instruction was intended as a conservative element in slave life, and clearly it did not provide the bondspeople with a successful ideology of revolt, slave religion, a synthesis of African and Christian traditions, was used in a progressive manner by slaves. Their application of collective moral principles under the guise of Christianity illustrates how religion can be used effectively to keep a community spiritually alive and culturally creative during a period of historical crisis. Although religion was at the heart of the Gullahs' process of socialization

in the slave quarters, this did not imply total acceptance of a Judeo- 567
Christian concept of reality. The Gullahs broadened the meaning of 771
Christianity, organizing and integrating it into past beliefs and practices. 177
Two traditions formed the basis of the Gullahs' struggle against slavery. 178
The example of Christ allowed them to take a superior attitude toward
their oppressors. But they also exerted spiritual and psychological autonomy by clinging to Africanity. In their isolation, the Gullahs remained an uprooted people whose acceptance of Christianity was sometimes outward, selective, and subject to reinterpretations which would not force them to relinquish old ways entirely. Of course, African beliefs, where these remained, accommodated the slave situation just as Christianity, to some extent, accommodated African religion and philosophy. Where Protestantism did not tolerate Africanity as a separate expression, Africanisms sometimes continued through secretiveness or by finding a place at the center of Protestantism as practiced by the slaves.

As Lawrence Levine notes, freedom placed the slaves in a culturally 567
marginal situation, and weakened their "cultural self-containment." No 177
longer were values and cultural standards determined from within the 178
group. African-Americans found themselves in a bicultural situation, absorbing elements of the dominant society in order to obtain recognition
and privileges. Perhaps at the moment of freedom the period of accommodation began as a significant factor in black life. Nowhere is this more 567
pronounced than in the organization of the black church. This point may 795
be most easily illustrated by the motif of the gospel songs and their otherworldly context, whereas the slave spirituals were full of camouflaged 177
prayers for freedom. As Levine points out, the period after bondage reflects a changing consciousness.[3] Slave religion bred radicalism in the 178 771
early years, and progressivism later. The institutionalized black church, formed after freedom, was far more powerful and independent, but often counseled conservatism.

Sam Polite lived long past bondage. He was over one hundred years 793
old when he prayed the prayer of "The Long Look." He had grown up 771
in slavery, lived through emancipation, reconstruction, restoration, and 782
into the twentieth century of segregation. Still he prayed the prayer of hope. Still he asked for a sign—a look at the future for his people. Polite's prayer implied what history has revealed—that the "New Jerusalem" evaded the African-Americans after freedom. The emancipation ex- 771
perience, born of hope and optimism, brought a new kind of bondage. 567
177

771 Gullahs and other African-Americans were to readjust to the new reli-
567 gion that served them so well in bondage. Slave religion was an adaptive
and vital spiritualism, a guide for living and for struggle. Acceptance of
177 Christianity had little to do with accommodating slavery. Acceptance of
segregation after freedom, without a struggle, owed much to the creeping conservatism within the black church.

One hundred years after the Emancipation Proclamation took effect, a
121 black religious leader spoke out that "the Negro is not free." Outside
177 forces that prevented black equality are well known. Historical forces
within black society, on the leadership level, have been analyzed but little. Gullahs and other African-Americans did not come out of bondage unscathed. But they did emerge, for the most part, psychologically and communally intact. Though toughened by generations of bitter servitude, they maintained an optimistic spirit. Gullahs were not accommodationists in 1863 and 1865, but a community hoping and eager to take their place as citizens. They were aware of their strength as a people. What happened to erode the African-American sense of worldly confidence was not so much born of slavery as it was the product of unfulfilled promises from the national sector and perhaps disappointed leadership from the black institutional religious community in the years of the first freedoms and afterward. As W. E. B. DuBois stated, the greatness of black religion can only be found in its link with the "spiritual strivings of the black masses," as it takes a stand on social and political issues affecting African-Americans.

APPENDIX E

Gullah Folkways

● 177 Because they occupied a position of servitude, the Gullahs had to accept
178 outwardly, points of view, customs, and beliefs to which they were exposed by the dominant society. Nevertheless, through sublety and secretiveness they were able to retain some of their previously held beliefs and practices. After slavery, the Gullahs were occasionally willing to share some of their beliefs, customs, and "superstitions" with those readily identifiable as friends, or with those who would not censure the Gullahs for their ways of thinking. Thus a wealth of information about Gul-
127 lah culture was collected from various sources, but particularly by WPA
128 workers. The following information related to Gullah folk religion and supernatural beliefs provides a mere sample of the material. Unless
178 otherwise stated, this information on Gullah folk beliefs was taken from the WPA files at the South Carolina Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia. Although more research is needed in this area, it was nevertheless possible to trace some of these beliefs to African origins.

775

Folk Beliefs

[856] [828] Spirits show themselves to babies more often than to grown people. When babies smile or cry out in their sleep, it is because some spirit is amusing or troubling them.

[764] [789] If there is a baby in a house of death, pass the baby over the coffin. This will prevent the spirit from returning to trouble the baby.

845 791 787 People born with a caul or veil over their faces are supposed to have strange powers, to foretell the future, see spirits, etc.*

3: Creel H-4 (no date) 1988

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175 113 [197] [177] ●

17. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*, 74–114. Additionally Ian Hancock partly bases his contention of the prevalence of Upper Guinea influence in Gullah dialect on the introduction of creole-speaking slaves brought to South Carolina from this region of Africa. The number of Africans speaking Guinea Coast creole English was small compared to those who spoke no English. Yet the former could have begun the process of spreading creolized English to the latter. Ian F. Hancock, "Gullah and Barbadian—Origins and Relationships." *American Speech* 55 no. 1 (Spring, 1980): 27–30.

18. Richard Jobson, *The Golden Trade or A Discovery of the River Gambia* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1623), 42, 123–25; Francis Moore, *Travels into the Inland Parts of Africa* (London: J. Stagg, 1739), 17–29, 30–32, 38–39, 47–52, 72–73, 80–82, 105–22; Michel Adanson, *A Voyage to Senegal, the Isle of Goree and the River Gambia* (London: J. Nourse and W. Johnston, 1759), 166; Joseph Corry, *Observations Upon the Windward Coast of Africa* (London: Frank Cass. 1958; repr. from 1807 ed.), 64–66; David McPherson, *Annals of Commerce*, 4 vols. (London: Johnson Reprint Co., 1972; repr. from 1805 ed.), IV: 141–42; Harry Gailey, Jr., *A History of the Gambia* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), 6, 11, 13; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 143; David P. Gamble, *The Wolof of Senegambia* (London: International African Institute, 1957), 31–37; Christopher Fyfe, *A History of Sierra Leone* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 1–4; Mannix and Cowley, *Black Cargoes, 15–16; SCG*, July 2, 1760, October 11, 1760, August 29, 1761; *South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal*, March 13, 1769, May 8, 1769, June 22, 1769, July 2, 1771, August 13, 1771, December 1, 1772. June 1, 1773, July 18, 1774, January 13, 1785, December 1, 1772.

19. Appendix A; *SCG*, August 19, 1756, June 23, 1756.

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20. Donnan, *Documents*, IV: 404 n.; Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 41; Morgan, "Black Society in the Lowcountry," 84–85; DuBois, *African Trade*, 90; Schaper, *Sectionalism*, 81–88, 149–62; Sellers, *Charleston Business*, 29–30, 128; Appendix A; Wood, *Black Majority*, 333–41. Higgins states that many slaves, prior to 1775, entered Charleston but were not employed in Carolina. The Sea Island port of Beaufort did some importing as well, although Higgins gives no port-by-port importation breakdown. He believes the "majority of all Negroes in the United States today are descended from blacks brought to North America during the colonial period." This has even stronger implications for the spread of cultural influences by ethnic groups of the middle period of the trade. Higgins, "Geographical Origins of Negro Slaves," 39, 46–47.

17 113

21. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 3–15, 233.

22. Moore, *Travels*, 29–35, 40–51; Jobson, *Golden Trade*, 27–37; Adanson, *Voyage to Senegal*, 57–59; Smith, *Voyage to Guinea*, 32; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 117; Charlotte Quinn, *Mandingo Kingdoms of the Senegambia* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 1–54; Gailey, *History of Gambia*, 10–17; Henry Fenwick Reeve, *The Gambia: Its History, Ancient, Medieval and Modern* (London: Smith, Elder, 1972), 12, 73, 78–79, 171–79, 180–81, 198–203; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 156–67.

175 113

23. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 112–15, 116–17; Moore, *Travels*, 41–44; Reeve, *Gambia, Ancient Medieval, Modern*, 171–78.

24. Moore, *Travels*, 42–43.

25. Douglas Grant, *The Fortunate Slave* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), Chapter 4, 156–67; Moore, *Travels*, 205–8; Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 116–17. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*. For another example of a black nobleman being sold into slavery see Terry Alford, *Prince Among Slaves* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986; repr. from 1977 ed.).

26. Rodney, *History of Upper Guinea*, 111–17, 236–39.

27. John Matthews, *A Voyage to the River Sierra Leone* (London: Frank Cass, 1966; repr.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
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PREFACE

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> The future of American Negroes is in the South. Here they have made their greatest contribution to American culture; and here they have suffered the damnation of slavery, the frustration of reconstruction and the lynching of emancipation. . . . Here is the magnificent climate; here is the fruitful earth under the beauty of the Southern sun; and here, if anywhere on earth, is the need of the thinker, the worker, and the dreamer. This is the firing line.
>
> *W. E. B. DuBois, speech at Benedict College, Columbia, South Carolina, October 20, 1946*

● 177 THE TRAFFIC on River Road is heavy. When I first came to this part of Johns Island in 1964, it was a quiet rural black community. Now expensive cars cruise past on their way to Kiawah and Seabrook islands. These resort islands can only be reached by driving across Johns Island and meeting the approval of a guard at a security gate. Beyond the guarded gates are plush hotels and upscale shopping facilities, beachfront houses and condominiums. Those who are waved through the checkpoint are mainly affluent visitors from afar.

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The traditional and the modern coexist eerily on Johns Island now. I notice the incongruity at once in Wesley United Methodist Church. I sit in its elegant pews and listen to the organist and the robed choir perform staid hymns from the Methodist hymnal. But the congregation sings out in the old African polyrhythmic style of the sea islands, almost as though the hymns were ancient spirituals. The present organist accompanies the hymns in a jazz-influenced modern gospel style that dominates the singers and sometimes drowns them out. The result is exciting, but I miss the special kind of excitement of the old *a capella* shouting style for which Johns Island is famous.

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114 I have come to Johns Island with Candie Carawan, historian Albert Raboteau, and filmmaker Louise Cox. Candie's husband, Guy, is flying in from a folk song concert and is to join us this afternoon at Janie Hunter's house. In the 1960s Guy and Candie lived and worked among these black people on Johns Island for two years. They wrote a book about the people of Johns Island—*Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* But they are more than just the chroniclers of this story. They are part of the story too. They came to Johns Island to learn about Gullah culture; but they also made a great contribution to the people of Johns Island, and through them, to the civil rights movement and to all of us.

121 The story of Johns Island is one of a community's efforts to develop its economic and social resources in accordance with its own needs while at the same time preserving its incredibly rich folk heritage. Balancing development and preservation is a difficult task under any circumstances. When one considers the formidable obstacles against which the people of Johns Island had to contend—the legacy of slavery and segregation, the burdens of poverty and lack of education, the pressures of economic survival—that they have maintained that precarious balance for more than a generation seems little short of miraculous. It is not a story of inevitable or easy success, and it is not over yet. But enough has happened to command our attention. And enough remains in doubt to command our sympathy.

• 179 SKIN AND HAIR. Skin and hair. They seemed to matter more than anything else when Guy first came to Johns Island in 1959. The statute books in South Carolina were filled with laws based on differences in skin and hair. It seems unbelievable in retrospect, but it was the official policy of my

[P. vii-B]

●177 native state to separate South Carolinians from one another on the basis of skin and hair. Blacks and whites could not legally associate except in the sanctioned roles of subordinate and superior. Not only were most black citizens disfranchised at the polls, blacks were systematically separated from whites in schools, in jobs, and in public accommodations. The policy was called segregation, or Jim Crow, and it was very thoroughgoing. Behind the mask of civility, our harsh racial caste system branded all black South Carolinians as inferior.

Segregation was characterized by two sets of almost everything: there was one set of churches, stores, funeral homes, and drinking fountains for black Carolinians and another for white Carolinians. Black students were relegated to Jim Crow schools, black travelers to the back of the Jim Crow bus, and black moviegoers to the Jim Crow balcony. And there were separate neighborhoods for blacks and whites. It was not difficult to tell which were which: the pavement ended where the black neighborhoods began. But not everything came in pairs. Some things, such as parks, libraries, and swimming pools, were rarely available to black Carolinians at all.

Anyone could tell that the segregation laws were unconstitutional on their face: they violated the constitutional requirement that states not deny the equal protection of the laws to any citizen. But the system of segregation was even more subtly entrenched in South Carolina law and practice than that. It was also characterized by discriminatory enforcement of other laws that were not in themselves discriminatory. And social services were administered on a discriminatory basis. As a result, black Carolinians had less than half the chance of finishing high school as white Carolinians and less than a third the chance of finishing college or entering a profession. Moreover, black Carolinians had the prospect of earning less than half as much as white Carolinians, were twice as likely to be unemployed or imprisoned, and could expect a shorter life span.

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Until the mid-twentieth century the only organization in South Carolina explicitly dedicated to racial advancement was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (the NAACP). At the time Septima Clark began teach-

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177 ing on Johns Island, the first chapters of the
668 NAACP were being organized in South Carolina.
By 1920 there were more than a thousand members in chapters around the state.

But the NAACP was an extremely cautious organization in those early decades. It took as its mission the improvement of black life within the segregated system rather than challenging the state's official racism. Unfortunately, its cautious approach enhanced the white stereotype that blacks were "contented." When the South Carolina Conference of the NAACP was formed in 1929, however, a shift occurred from "uplift" to a quest for equality. Three major legal cases—the teachers' salary equalization suit, the challenge to the all-white Democratic primary, and the suit for admission to the law school of the University of South Carolina—advanced the cause in the 1940s. When *Briggs v. Elliott*, the Clarendon County school case, was filed in 1950, the NAACP legal staff decided to launch a direct attack against public school segregation. *Briggs v. Elliott* was the only case from the Deep South in the package of cases upon which the United States Supreme Court, in a historic decision on May 17, 1954, declared segregated public schools inherently unequal. After the
177 NAACP's aggressive legal action, the South Car-
668 olina legislature passed a law in 1955 forbidding
any city or state employee to belong to the
875 NAACP. Septima Clark, a long-time member of
the organization, was dismissed from her elementary school teaching position. Although she had taught in the Charleston County school system for almost forty years, the Charleston County School Board denied her retirement pay when she was fired. She then took a job with Highlander Folk School.

891 In 1957, with training and assistance from
Highlander Folk School, Septima Clark and Esau
875 Jenkins began the first citizenship education school
641 on Johns Island. They chose Bernice Robinson to
be the first teacher. The classes did not merely
666 stick to reading and writing for voter registration
but also discussed the power that people could have if they know how government is organized. The islanders became aware of their rights as citizens and learned ways to achieve them. By 1960

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● 177 178 MANY CHANGES have come to Johns Island since Guy and Candie first lived and worked there. Some of the changes—low-cost housing, a health care facility, and a home for the elderly—have been initiated by the islanders themselves. But rapid resort development on Kiawah and Seabrook islands have contributed in their own way to the transformation of Johns Island, bringing new pressures and new challenges to the islanders.

178 One part of Esau Jenkins's legacy is a dedication to progress, to building institutions that enable the people of Johns Island to control their own lives. But another part of his legacy is a dedication to preserving the cultural heritage from which the people of Johns Island draw their strength and their distinctiveness. Not all islanders share both parts of Esau Jenkins's legacy equally. There are some who believe that the cultural heritage created by the ancestors in the bitter days of slavery and segregation is best forgotten. They feel the past as a burden of shame rather than as a source of strength. But without a sense of where they came from, how can the younger generation understand their achievement or comprehend how far they have come?

Whether the next generation will recognize and value the power and beauty of the past is by no means certain. At least some members of the younger generation are drawing strength from the old traditions. They are at home in the present because they are oriented in time as well as in space. Without a sense of where they came from, how else can people know whether they are going forward or backward?

114 If Esau Jenkins were still alive, I believe he would like this new edition of *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* In it Guy and Candie Carawan have preserved the magnificent heritage of the past in such a way that it can serve as a source of strength for the present. Johns Islanders—and all of us—can use that strength as Esau Jenkins did: to look to the future, to see what contribution we can make, to summon our friends to work together to do what still needs to be done.

Charles Joyner
December 1988

[P-X-B]

INTRODUCTION

177 178 (126) IT HAS BEEN more than twenty years since *Ain't You Got a Right to the Tree of Life?* was first published—twenty-three years since the material was recorded and the original photographs were taken. In some ways the world pictured in those photographs no longer exists. When you visit the island now, you are immediately aware of change. There are many more houses and signs of prosperity. Most of the older, weathered, wooden homes are gone, replaced by brick or newer wood ones. The two main roads are heavily traveled now, primarily by people on their way to the two resort communities adjacent to Johns Island—Kiawah and Seabrook. On the major crossroads there are small shopping centers and in the summer months produce stands to market vegetables to resort-goers.

464 In the early 1960s the islanders were hard-
pressed people—maids, cooks, farmhands, and la-
212 borers. The level of education for most was quite
low and yet we found an insight and wisdom about
life, and particularly a richness of folk expression,
114 that was inspirational. Before Guy came to Johns
Island, he had traveled and worked in many parts
of the South. A musician with training in folklore,
he had a keen appreciation for the depth and variety of southern folk culture. On Johns Island he found something special, a world with a beautiful and flourishing cultural heritage unlike any he had encountered before. He felt it should be shared with many more people and nurtured in a way that would enable it to survive. Yet Johns Island was in the midst of cultural and social transition. How could he, as a visitor, make a contribution to its
survival? We would spend the two years we lived
(101) on Johns Island in 1963–65 struggling with that
question and trying a variety of projects designed
to focus attention on the cultural richness of the

(P. xi-A)

114 Star Hall to travel to other parts of the country to
123 share their songs, in an effort to keep alive some of
the older folk material. Each of these projects
brought a complex mixture of success and problems
and a renewed determination to keep trying.

For generations the Johns Island people were
131 relatively isolated from mainstream America. The
133 low, flat island, covered with tidal creeks and
[505] marshes, farmland, and forests of oaks draped with
[491] gray Spanish moss, was accessible only by boat until
the early part of the century, when bridges and
causeways connecting it with the mainland began
to be built. Cut off from the mainland, these descendants
177 of cotton plantation slaves retained many
178 aspects of the old slave culture: a regional dialect,
Gullah, still marked by distinctly African and Caribbean
traits; a large body of folktales, cures, and
supernatural beliefs; and a folk version of Christianity
with a "shouting" style of singing old spirituals
and hymns and a local "praise house" form of
worship.

Old and new institutions existed side by side.
344 For many people, Moving Star Hall—a tiny, battered
clapboard building—had been the central
meeting place for nearly fifty years. It housed a
"tend-the-sick" and burial society, a secret lodge,
and a community of worship. Here the members
[796] could express themselves freely and fully; in the
Sunday night worship service each person took a
turn preaching, testifying, praying, and raising a
song.

177 Down the road a mile or so is Wesley Methodist
794 Church, where a number of these same people
attended regular Sunday services. Here the old
346 folk ways were gradually being replaced by more
formal modern practices. Wesley is a fine church
with handsome pews, Methodist hymnals, a robed
796 choir, and an organ. On the first Sunday of the
533 month everyone listened to the Reverend G. C.
Brown, who came from the mainland in the 1930s
with a college degree, and sang hymns and spirituals
led by the choir. But on the three Sundays a
month when he preached in other churches, the
congregation forgot about the organ and the hymnals
and sang older spirituals, hymns, and shouts,

(P xii-A)

796 accompanied only by foot and hand rhythms; the
533 service became much more spontaneous, like that
in Moving Star Hall.

●177 In the intervening years, this evolution to-
ward more modern forms has continued. Moving
178 Star Hall is no longer being used for the intimate
796 and intense prayer meetings or for the all-night
[344] watch meetings attended primarily by the older
people. These important gatherings now take place
in the larger churches. The Hall is currently home
[794] to a younger congregation, a Pentecostal church
[795] pastored by David Hunter, a member of one of the
families very important to the original book. Here you find, along with more modern gospel songs and sermons, echoes of the old form of worship, but with the accompaniment of snare drum replacing the complex hand and foot rhythms of the shout. In the larger island churches, there is a vigorous contemporary religious culture with gospel choirs, wonderful organ accompaniment, and powerful preachers. But the older, more spontaneous forms of expression—raising a song by the spirit, taking it into a shout, testifying and preaching when moved by feelings—are not so easily integrated into the more formal structure of the service. There is a feeling from some of the younger people that it will be no great loss if this older level of expression dies out completely. One member of Wesley put it most succinctly when he explained, "There is a battle going on in the church now to get rid of all the old-style religion and singing. The battle is going on subconsciously. It's not going on knowingly because if it was put on the table, folk would take another look at it." It is our profound hope that people *will* take another look at it and make sure a place for the older expression remains. For this deepest layer of cultural tradition is marked by great complexity and beauty—the product of generations of community creativity.

178 In the 1960s the most unusual and modern in-
stitution on Johns Island was the Progressive Club,
474 a successful consumers' cooperative owned and op-
erated by some of the poorest people on the island.
[443] It contained a large grocery store and the only gym
[529] on the island and served as a center for adult edu-
[873] (P.xii-B) cation and voter registration.
[666]

159 good deal. He founded the Committee on Better
Racial Assurance (COBRA), a multi-issue commu-
(268) nity organization in Charleston also serving the sea
islands. He has been chairman of the Charleston
County Democratic party. He ran for state senate
and received support in both the black and white
communities. He is the owner of WPAL, a vital
radio station in Charleston that consistently ad-
dresses social issues as well as responds to the mu-
sical tastes of the community. He was the principal
mediator in the major civil rights campaign of the
Charleston area—a strike of hospital workers in
the late 1960s.

464 The job situation on Johns Island has im-
proved slightly. In the 1960s all young people who
finished high school left the area to find work.
(489) Now, with improved transportation, it is possible
for them to work in Charleston and still live on the
(241) island. The resort developments and the new small
businesses offer some employment, but farming,
(178) long a mainstay in the island economy, is steadily
declining. Farmland is now the prime target of de-
311 velopers. But the people who have stayed on Johns
433 Island have held onto a firm determination to live
in their traditional community, and many of their
hopes and dreams are still in place.

179 Development on Johns Island has taken two
forms. Tourist development, spreading rapidly all
•179 along the coastal islands south of Washington,
D.C., is a threat to the indigenous population on
Johns Island. Kiawah and Seabrook, accessible
only by driving across Johns Island, are full-fledged
resort communities with condominiums, hotels
and inns, shops and boutiques, and large private
homes. Both are entered by passing through a security checkpoint. Viewed initially as offering some
economic and social benefits to island residents,
both have been disappointing, catering to wealthy
visitors from outside the region and offering only
menial and limited employment. Wadmalaw Island, just across the Esau Jenkins Memorial Bridge
from Johns Island, is in the throws of plans for development. An island committee made up of black
and white landowners has been meeting regularly
to design their own development plan that may

(P xiii, B)

179 counter those of outside interests. The County
Commission accepted this new plan for limited and
•177 controlled development in early 1988, but the island
residents know they must be constantly vigilant
to ensure its success.

179 But another kind of development is here as
well. In the 1970s a comprehensive community organization
758 was put in place to address health needs
on the island. Beginning first with a small clinic as
[743] part of Rural Missions, Inc., a local community improvement
association, it grew to include environmental
health, housing for the elderly, nutrition,
and programs for substance abuse, as well as the
development of a full-scale medical clinic and a
nursing home. The Sea Island Comprehensive
Health Care Corporation is a crucial factor in the
present and the future of five sea islands—Johns,
James, Wadmalaw, Edisto, and Yonges—and in
many ways is a direct outgrowth of the story Esau
Jenkins recounts earlier in this book. The Health
[423] Care Corporation is also a landowner, but it has
utilized the land for the benefit of the indigenous
community rather than for wealthy newcomers. It's
a model worth looking at.

423 One of the greatest pressures on Johns Island
is land ownership. As the chain of sea islands becomes
increasingly valuable for tourist development,
the patterns of passing property down
through families and the need to know about land
and tax laws become crucial to the survival of the
community. People on Johns Island are now well
aware of the value of their land and are coming
together to plan their futures. Further down the
coast, on St. Helena Island, Penn Community
Center has sponsored a program to guard against
the loss of land by blacks. The center's director,
Emory Campbell, having seen his home community
of Hilton Head undergo drastic change in the
1950s, is an eloquent speaker for the protection of
the land for traditional communities. He and a coworker,
Joe McDomick, have come to Johns Island
to participate in workshops on land issues.

871 As in 1965, education is still a major concern
on Johns Island. Esau told of the struggle to get a
[563] black high school on the island. In the late 1960s
[P.XIV-A]

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

THAT WAS THE TIME WHEN PEACE DIDN'T DECLARE

567 My grandmother was Hannah Seabrook. She raised me up and told me a lot about Rebel Times. Old Hannah Seabrook was a cooker and a washer. Her first husband got sold. Yes sir! They sell my father's daddy. Sell him for money.

When my father was coming up he used to have to go see what old Master wanted him to do. He was just a boy and couldn't do none of that heavy work. So the old Master would have him shine he shoes. One day he found some finger marks on 'em and knock my father down the stairs. Good thing I wasn't living in those days—you would of had to kill me first. But that was in the time when peace didn't declare.

567 177 When the war came through, my daddy, Cyrus Jenkins, was just a young boy. That time he was in the creek—had to dig the mud and mud the field for what they gonna plant that year. My daddy just up and ran off with the Yankees. He followed the Yankee until peace declared. My grandma didn't see him for four years. When he come back Grandma went to the depot. When she see her one son she drop her little bit of clothes and bind the son. That's right, had only one raggedy soldier coat and nothing else but that.

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

567 159 SHE TAKE THE SCRAP AND MAKE A LITTLE DRESS FOR ME

I born in 1878, the twentieth day of November. I was my ma's seventh child. Everybody run for give me name. I grow up in the white people house. I do the small things—I could thread needle for grandma, man. And they make me a little dress, you know. I even wash the Missus' feet. That's right, sir! That's right! Wash her feet in the basin. And when she was the only dressmaker 'round the village, she take the scrap and make a little dress for me.

My grandma had a scarf handkerchief—a white handkerchief she brought from Rebel Time, and when she died I tie he head with that. That's right. Yes ma'am!

722 power, see? That's when the farming situation changed; they built these roads, and they began to produce more food for defense. White farmers. Negroes have come to tractors in later years, after they got on their feet. But they have small farms. No comparison with white farms.

●[177] [241] [423] There weren't too many white people here then, but they owned most of the land and they had the farms. The Negroes were little farmers. Many of them had their own lots, but weren't able to build a house. World War II came, they were able to make some money and they moved off the farms and built little homes.

464 More people work in the city now. Nothing here to do except a few farmers to work for. Few women have employment on the farm. They work in the city as domestics. You find a few on the farm here and there. In the springtime they take trucks around and pick up the hands for the day.

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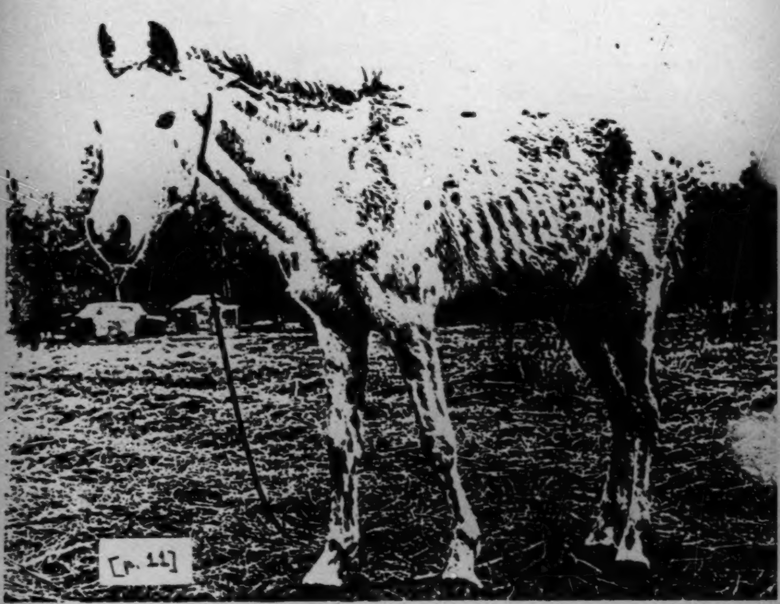

[p. 11]

Mrs. Betsy Pinckney

YOU CAN BE BLACK OR SCARLET

829 Now some people after slavery times think to themselves, "If I see a white and he needs help, but they didn't tell me to do it, I wouldn't do it anymore." But me, I go there and they ain't call me neither. He need help and his family need it, and that's the reason God help some people to get along so good.

I treat everybody right; my heart open for all. And that's why people treat me well for it. That's right! Sometime I pick the bean and I say, "I ought to give 'em a quart of bean." Well, when I send that bean, how they glad.

I don't care what kind of people, I going there and help 'em. I do it, sir. (771) I got proof! You can be black or scarlet but it don't make no difference. The pure in heart shall see God.

Mrs. Alice Wine

NOW THE WORLD IS NOTHING BUT WHITE PEOPLE

829 177 When I were growing up, I must have seen one white man in my life. And I was so scared of that white man I never see his face. You might see but two white man in the whole Johns Island then. But now the island is full of white people. There so many white people it seem like there always one now. Before then you wouldn't see no white people there in six or seven months. But now, the world is nothing but white people. White people!

829 779 The Bible says you must love your fellow mans, 'gardless of what color you are, you must love 'em. Ain't no need for I love my color, hate you. 'Cause God don't please with it. 'Cause we all is God's children. We must love one another.

829 77 The church doesn't do a thing for you no more than preach a sermon. That's all the preacher do for you. But you got to live a life living right here. The way you walk and the way you talk, the way your action—there's your sermon right there. You preaching your sermon before you die.

The way you treat people, that's your heaven right there. Now if you born dumb, you just dumb. If you're a mean person all your life, you're just a mean person; people can't say good for you. If you're a good person all your life, that's all people will say is he's a good person. Got to first have heaven here before you have Heaven. If you have speck in your heart, you cannot get in God's kingdom. I never been up there yet, but I feel about it.

Mrs. Janie Hunter

829 I CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT

177 You find people 'ssociate with Negro 'round here, Charleston is not their home. That is one thing I can't understand, because we have to do everything for them. I was working for my lady for three years. I raise her baby. Mostly all these people have a maid or baby-sitter. You can't 'ssociate with 'em and then people want you to cook their food and take care their children. I can't figure it out.

Mr. William Saunders

THEY DON'T WANT TO GET OUT ON A LIMB

829 177 I believe, in my honest opinion, that there's a whole lot of white people on this island that's not bad at all. And I think they would like to see everybody happy, but they don't want to get out on a limb from their own people, be called "nigger-lovers" or any other stories that the people can dream up for them.

I knew a white guy and we sat around and was drinking beer and talking and he was saying that he was with the Negroes in most of the things that they wanted and he believed that most of the things they wanted was right. He said he has never done nothing to hurt the Negroes. I told him that I felt like he hadn't done anything to help the Negroes either because he just sat back and was sort of looking out for his personal self, instead of saying to his friends, when they have gatherings and the question comes up, "I don't believe that we are right in what we are doing. I believe that everybody should have a chance."

829 177 357 I think seriously that we got a whole lot of Negroes that are hurting us more than the whites, by acting content—like the maids in the house. Any time the madam would say something to them, they would smile even though within themselves they were unhappy. But this is what was expected of them and so this is what they're doing. They have been conditioned to this. They are not frank and not honest with themselves or the people they deal with. I believe this is one of the things that's hurting us because then the white man feel that he could always push you back, because you're just that way; you're not going to stand up to nothing.

Mr. William Saunders

ALL WOULD BE GETTING EQUAL EDUCATION

829 177

As far as Johns Island is concerned, we got a long way to go. I believe sincerely that there will have to be something that happens real bad to change the situation here. We've coexisted all these years. We have accepted this, and the white man have accepted it. Very seldom do we have to come together on any major thing. So in this respect we could make it if we could keep on going like that, but we can't. Because we have gotten to the place now that my kids are not wanting what I wanted, or *thought* I wanted.

[871] Nobody has applied yet to go to the white high school. But I think

829 871 •177 when it come right down to it, it's gonna be accepted. Actually Johns Island is real poor and I don't think nobody could afford for money to be cut off from the schools. The superintendent of the schools told me that if the schools were closed, the Negroes would suffer more than the whites. I don't believe this, and I don't believe that he believes it, because actually to me then we all would be getting equal education—nobody gets none.

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NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
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Miss Carol Bligen

I KNOW BE TROUBLE

871

● 177 If they integrated Haut Gap School, be trouble. I know be trouble,
829 'cause I don't like nobody to tease me. If one of them come and tease me,
first thing I do, I going fight.

Mr. William Saunders

INTIMIDATION HAS BEEN BAD

177 829 The whites and the Negroes on this island haven't gotten involved in violence. But the intimidation, I think, has been bad as far as the white is concerned. Like making a person feel like he might not have a job tomorrow. This is something that bothers the Negroes a whole lot. Although it never bothered me because I feel like anybody that works me, he's working me because he's making some money off me, he's not working me because he likes me. He's working me because I'm a good worker and he needs me. And I believe that we all need each other—without the whites the Negro couldn't make it; and I believe without the Negroes the whites couldn't make it.

177 829 464 They've used the migrant workers in this intimidation. When I first knew about the migrant workers, they were really, really treated bad. They had no place to stay when they came here, and they were always treated bad. But since the integration movement has started here on the island, I think the white farmers have really gone for the migrant workers because they know that the migrant laborers really don't stand for nothing. They're just somebody to work.

Most of them, I've found out, have been in trouble before. They had trouble somewhere, or they couldn't make it at home, or something like that, and that's how come they become migrant laborers. So the white farmers figure, "Here's a chance for us to use the Negroes without the Negroes really being able to do anything about it. We don't have to worry about them getting an education. All they want to do is get our crops out, and then we can sort of hurt the Negroes here on the island by doing it this way."

[465] The biggest farmer here, during the last season, he was working the migrant laborers three days and the regular Negroes on the island two days a week. So this is something where the Negroes used to look forward to making during the summertime eighty or ninety dollars a week, it be cut down to thirty-five or forty dollars a week.

177 829 This is to try to keep the Negroes from participating in things. It doesn't matter whether he or she has been participating or not, he's automatically placed in this category. Two farmers came by the Progressive Club last year during the workshops there and acted like they were taking down license numbers. Nobody knows if they were actually taking down the numbers or not; they never published them, but this really scared a lot of Negroes and they wouldn't even want to bring their cars around.

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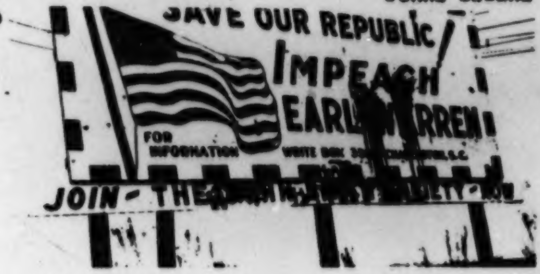

Rev. G. C. Brown

WE GOT ALONG

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829 The Negroes have been afraid to trust the white. They feel he isn't wanting them to begin with, and the white men feel that they are superior. That's what we have on this island.

There has never been any race problem since I've been here. By race problem I mean there hasn't been any violence. We got along. The Negroes just used to take things as accepted course. They been resigned to their fate, most of them, and satisfied with that.

You can tell the difference in the whites' attitude since 1954. They weren't quite as friendly, some of 'em, as they had been, because they thought there was going to be a rushing into the white schools, and they didn't want that. But I don't think they have to fear about that. Nobody's ever tried to go there.

It's just a matter of time until they are going to accept integration. [871] Well, I don't know about Johns Island. I won't say that here because, you see, people accept according to their education, I believe. The more a man knows, the more intelligent he becomes of worldly affairs. But now this island here is going to be a long time, I think.

The newspaper see a relation between the two races, they make that white man a Communist. Infiltration! Any time relationship between Negroes and whites, always be somebody tag 'em as a Communist. That's one of the policies of this Southland you'll find. They don't have anything else to say, they just say that. Just like Martin Luther King. They say he's a Communist and that's not true. Just a man trying to get what belongs to him.

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Mr. Esau Jenkins

WE NEED TO MAKE FRIENDS

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I have a white friend and we usually be frank with each other. He ask me, "Don't you think that the Negro want integration because they want to marry white women?"

I laughed. I said, "Are you kidding? You ever know any garden that's pretty without having a variety of flowers?" I said, "If you have all black flowers or all white flowers you don't have much of a garden, but if you have all kinds of flowers it looks pretty. Now Negroes can choose from almost white to the very black and different shades between, and then he's just wanting to have integration to marry a white woman?"

Years ago the Negroes on this island were skeptical of a white person if he show as if he want a friendship with them or help them, because only thing they know about the white folks is go out and work for them and they treat them as animal, and that's all. That's the kind of relationship they call good—to go out and do what they want done and then go home. Years ago, Negroes have never seen a white person come around, no more than if they come out to the house to ask them to work. They wouldn't even much come in, and the Negroes couldn't even go in the white folks house regardless of how much they work. But now things are changing a little bit.

Some time ago I went to a white home here, and I rung the bell, and to my surprise, the man invited me into the kitchen. We began to talk together, and the white girl came and peeped through the door to see who the daddy was talking to. And she went back to the mother and I heard the mother say, "Who is that?" and the girl say, "Mr. Jenkins." I was surprised she had said that. I just want to know what the mother thought when a white girl calling a Negro *Mister* Jenkins. That was a surprise to me. But we talk in a friendly manner 'til I ready to leave.

And I think it is because of these white persons who have come here, who have stayed with me lots of times, we have gone around together, we have sung together, we have prayed together, we have eaten together. And I think some of the white folks here are being ashamed of themselves just now. They can see the handwriting on the wall. We need to make friends.

You can see a change in the most of them. Not too many have come out openly and invited me in their home and sit with them as these one or two. The white magistrate has invited me in his home. We sat to the table together and discussed things on the island and the betterment of Negroes, and some white farmers have call me and we begin to talk. Not in the masses, but you can see the feeling, and they respect you much better. It's not the kind of relationship they were calling good relations some years ago, that you go out and do what I tell you to do and then go home.

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Mr. William Saunders

FREEDOM IS WORSE

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Really to me, freedom is worse in New York than it is on Johns Island. Because on Johns Island the white people are honest in letting you know that they don't want you to associate with them. In New York, if we go to a hotel and want a room, there's no segregation, they just ain't got no rooms.

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159 578 much opposition. But he had opposition to begin with—opposition from his own people. They went to the white people, and they gave him hard knocks, but he kept right on persisting; didn't never stop. But now they see he's going to make it anyway, so they just decided to let him off.

One reason people criticized Esau so much, they afraid he going too fast. They been resigned to their fate most of them, and satisfied with that. The struggle has come with Esau. Esau has advocated justice, and don't be satisfied until you get justice.

159 ● 177 There's been a great awakening through television and through the news media. They all begin to know now that we've been treated wrong for a long time. They are more conscious of that every day now. And you'll find a greater desire on the part of the individual to get some of the good things of life. But now, people still don't help Esau as much as they should. The prophet is without honor in his own country.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

159 829 AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

Long years ago I ask myself a question, Am I my brother's keeper? And the answer that I got was, You are. So then I decided to myself, since I'm no better than anybody, I don't feel I'm any worse than anybody. I decided to do anything I can to help people in order to help myself.

I have two question asked to me by other people. The first question was, how was I able to educate five children and live, born and raised on Johns Island—have never taught a school in my life, have never work for the government—and they all have made good grades in school, and they have been very mannerable to everybody. The way you raise your children, you can make 'em be lovable in this world, or you make 'em be hated by people, so it's your responsibility. Since God is kind enough to give you a child, then you ought to raise 'em the way he should go.

Then a man came to me and ask me, said, "Look, I notice them buses you have look so nice, and I understand you have sent all your children to school and you have gotten some property you own and doing some business. Where do you buy your hoodo root from?"

[789] Now you know that's silly. Hoodoo business. That's the thing that make people poor, because they believe in root. So I said to him (I didn't have the answer right away because I might have said something bad to him), but I said, "Look friend, where I got my root from, it only takes obedience and a simple mind to go home and go into your closet and get on your knees and ask God for what you want."

And I tell you one thing: every progress that I have made in life, it came to me while I was doing some good for somebody.

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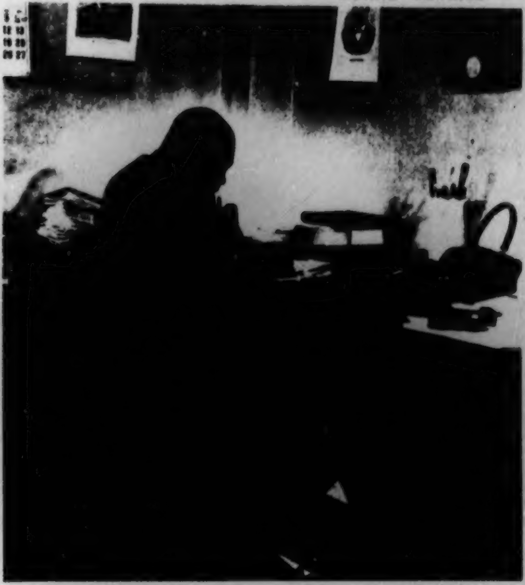

Mr. Esau Jenkins

THEY PAINTED IT BLACK

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872 I haven't gotten any further than the fourth grade in grammar school here. I had to work, and because of that I had to leave school. And then too, the school we had here wasn't encouraging to go to. We had around fifty children and one teacher with a one-door school.

[179] And beside that, they painted it black, that we could be identified as to who go to the school. It discouraged me when I got some pride. I left school and went to Charleston and started working on a boat. But I still was serious about getting my education. I know I couldn't have done anything out of a fourth-grade education.

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873 Then I got married some years later and find out that I have a great responsibility, and I know that my education was limited. So I decided that I would work and go to school at the same time. I went four years more, which help me to transact my own business, and now I'm happy to say that

159 was a little bit lazy, that kind of thing. But my father was very smart in carpentry. He built a house in a few days if you just give him the material. But then as he got older he turned more to farming.

159 177 803 My father was a man believe in whatever the white folks said. He didn't want to hurt them a bit. I know after I start farming with him, one day we went to carry some cotton to sell. The white man who figured what the cotton come to, he gave us a certain price. I started to figure mine.

Daddy told me, "Don't do that. The white folks never like that, Son."

I say, "Well, I'm not figuring for the white folks at this point, I'm figuring for my own benefit."

Well, he never figured, but I figured mine. Unfortunately, mine was wrong when the white man figured, but I wouldn't take it. I waited until everybody got the money, including my daddy, and I went to him. "According to what you paid me, my money didn't come to what it should come to for the amount of cotton I had."

So he said, "Well, let me see." Sure enough, he found out that he made a mistake.

But now if I said that before everybody, there might have been everybody who was there think that his own was wrong too. And everything might have been, but I *know* mine was wrong. And I certainly glad I was able to figure.

I told my daddy, say "Now Daddy, you see I don't know how long this man doing it, but this figuring was wrong, and I don't know how many other person was wrong, but I didn't say it because I was afraid that everybody would say the same thing, and then he would blame me for it. But can't you see it's good to do your own figuring?"

Of course, I convince him at that time, but he never would do it.

159 *Mr. Esau Jenkins*

THEN I NOTICE THE GREEKS

(248) (241) I planted cotton for about four, five years—my father and I together. It takes one whole year to harvest cotton. Then my mind tell me to start with vegetables. Then most of the people start on vegetable farming—truck crop farming, where you can plant three vegetables a year, no doubt four. That's what prompt me to buy a truck.

159 177 432 Then I notice as I go into the city to sell my vegetables, most of the stores are operated by Greeks. They buy all kind of vegetables. So I thought the best thing for me to do then is to try to learn the Greeks' language. I could sell more stuff and help me to do more business and help my family better. So I went and took Greek. I took Greek for about a year and a half

159 177 [432] or two, and I was able to understand the Greek language in everyday speaking in business, and that helped me to go on. That is the thing that helped me to educate most of my children.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

HERE'S A MAN BEING SHOT FOR A DOG

159 177 682 Two evil things that happened motivated me to get involved in my work on Johns Island. In September of 1938 two Negroes were riding in a truck. A dog ran out of a gate. The man driving tried to avoid it, but he couldn't, he hit the dog and killed it. The dog's owner, a white man (he wasn't a native of Johns Island, but had come here to live), jumped in his own car, and he carried a shotgun and ran this man down.

The fellow who wasn't driving tried to plead with him, ask him not to shoot him because he didn't mean to run over this dog, but he shot this fellow dead.

The family got a white lawyer from Charleston to try to bring that case in the court, and from 1938 until this present time, nobody heard any more of that case.

Well, that's something that I felt like people who have good will and think about decency and human dignity should do something about.

Then in the early '40s a white man, Mr. Malone, move from Mississippi onto Johns Island. He was sixty years old, his wife was twenty. They had a female dog and as a rule at certain times of the year, several dogs will go around these homes with female dogs. For some reason her dog was across the street one morning at a Negro man's home. She heard her dog's voice hollering as if somebody was beating the dog, and she went over and asked this Negro man by the name of Sammy Grant if he put his dog on her dog.

He said, "No, I didn't."

She said, "Yes, you did."

And he said, "Whoever said I put my dog on your dog tell a damn lie."

So she went back home, and we don't know what she told her husband.

Every morning Mr. Malone caught a truck about seven o'clock to go to work. The next morning, when the truck came by, he stopped it and called to Sammy Grant. By the time Sammy came around by the tail of the truck, Mr. Malone shot him right there. He was so close, and with a 12-gauge gun, this boy bled a lot.

The man who owned the truck stop a car and rush him to the hospital. By the time he got there, he had bled out the blood that would keep him alive, and the doctor asked this man to rush out and get some blood right away, 'less he was going to die.

The man came down to the city market where people sell the vegetables to find the guardian of this boy or the mother to try to get some blood, 159 177 682 or try to get some money to buy blood for him. She said she didn't have any money. Everybody was standing around saying it was wrong, he should not have been shot. But I said, "Are you trying to help this boy? You can't listen to people say it's wrong. If they feel sorry for the boy they'll go down and give him blood."

I said, "Wait a minute, I'll get two of my brother-in-laws and I will go down and give him blood." So we went down. I gave the first pint and my two brother-in-laws gave the other two pints and save his life.

I ask him to tell me the truth what happened. I said to him, "Sammy, just as I gave you my blood to save your life, I will spend every dime and make sacrifice for you to help bring this thing to justice through the court." And he told me just what I've said.

So I went on Broad Street and hired a lawyer. He ask me to find a hundred dollars because he said he have to hire a stenographer to carry to Johns Island. The magistrate might not stick to the word he said in the court, so he need somebody to keep a record.

For a long time we heard nothing about the case. Finally I called up this lawyer and ask him what's wrong. I fussed at him a long time. Then we heard from the other man's lawyer that he wanted to make some kind of deal with Sammy. And we went and met with this lawyer.

I told him, "Mr. Malone shot Sammy with malice of forethought. Now I realize that it's a bad thing to call a woman a liar, but I don't think a man should be shot down for calling somebody a liar."

I said, "You know we have had one man shot dead over a dog and nothing came of it. The family paid a white lawyer to look out for the family and bring this thing to trial and nobody heard anything from it yet. Here's another man being shot for a dog. Now this is bad for race relations."

I told him if he were to come to Johns Island, with one man shot outright and another shot and left for dead, he might not be safe—and he could be ever so right, but because of the things that happened, Negroes began to get malice in their heart for white folks. We can't afford to let things like that go on. We, as people who know better, should make it better and make race relations better.

So he decided to pay us what Sammy had lost. He said that he hadn't felt like he was going to lose the case, but if he had won the case in court and then heard what I had just told him afterward, he never would have felt himself justified.

159 185 These are the things, then, that motivated me to organize in 1940 a progressive movement, that we could help the people to be better citizens, give them a chance to get a better education, and know how to reason and look out for themselves, and take more part in political action.

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159 people who are willing to see to it that our children will get a high school,
871 plus transportation to take them to and from school."

(661) The white kids were riding in school buses, and the buses were warm
when they got into it. When they got to the school, the schools were warm.
159 Yet our children had to walk between eight and ten miles per day, go to a
871 cold school with no heat. The teachers that teach the school, they live in
●177 Charleston—fifteen or eighteen miles away—and the children have to stand
185 outside until the teachers come. Then when the teachers come, if they didn't
(875) have any wood, they got to go out in back of the school and get wood to
make up the fire. Whether it raining, whether it cold, whether it snowing,
those children have to walk there, and after they got the fire started, it being
so cold, I don't think they could concentrate so well. And beside that they

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159 871 have forty to fifty children to one teacher, and have to carry 'em from scratch to seventh grade.

177 185 [661) So we know that was a terrible condition, and that's the condition that I want to try to eliminate. And that's my reason for not taking this bribe. I know that we wouldn't have gotten anywhere, not as long as I was willing to take bribe and go along with the white folks. I had made some enemy by not taking the bribe. I had made some of my people afraid of me because I kept on fighting for the Negroes' right. But I didn't stop.

159 494 177 [465) The white folks cut off this one big plantation that I used to haul to, as I had three buses and two trucks. Sometimes I make sixty dollars, sixty to eighty dollars a day, with three or four vehicle—twenty dollars for each one—to carry the people there. They cut that off, but I wouldn't stop. I keep on driving and keep on fighting.

872 873 494 Since we have gotten the high school, now we have had quite a few children graduated from the high school here on the island. Since then we have been able to get this consolidated grammar school, and we have buses.

Mr. Esau Jenkins

WE DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE WHEN WE GO INTO COURT

159 177 692 666

I'll tell you another way voting was able to help us. I could remember not too long ago, we didn't have a chance when we go into court. I remember a day I was riding with a man coming to Johns Island from Charleston, and a white person ran into the back of his truck. When we stop to find out what happen to the person, the law took side with the person who ran into the back of his truck, and he had to go to court.

We all thought that the judge would say, "Well, somebody ran into the back of the truck, certainly seem like that person is wrong." Unfortunately, he said that the colored man was wrong. He didn't have a chance in the court. But we decided to change that thing by getting people to see the importance of citizenship, registration and voting.

159 494 666 185 We got them to be interested in organizing what we call the Progressive Club. I emphasize the word "progressive" which mean look upward, do something better. And in this club we told them that if you're not registered

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159 to start with, you're going to have to *become* a registered citizen if you join.
666 And we ask every individual to pay twenty-five cent per month. For what?
[474] Just in case when you go into these unjust courts, your money pools and
somebody'll stand the bonds, or pay the fine. Now things are changed. The
[692] time would come when this same magistrate who have never listened to
Negroes would need their vote.

One year when he ran for the third time, the white folks decided to vote
159 against him—not all the white folks, just about fifty percent of them. And
● 177 he was thinking about dropping out of the election. He came to me and ask,
"What can you all do? I understand that the white folks is against me
666 because in the court sometime ago I was little bit lenience with Negro."

664 So I told him if he would promise that he would treat Negroes better,
185 make them realize that they are human being when they come into the court, not charge them for everything or just assume that they are wrong, but just give them what belongs to them—if they are right, let them know they are right—I said, "We will vote for you. We got a few Negroes voting. If you got fifty percent of your people, the rest of the Negroes certainly would turn the tide."

And when that night came, he won by the many Negroes had registration certificate. That change the situation. That magistrate now, whenever our people go into the court, he is very frank and fair with us. And so for that reason, we felt like the more we could get people registered, the better it would be.

Mrs. Alice Wine

HE IS A WONDERFUL CONQUEROR

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474 We start the Progressive Club with about two or three hundred head of people in '48 or '49. We used to meet in Moving Star Hall every third Sunday and pay twenty-five cents a head. And after we done pay out for that piece of property we got now, we stop paying monthly dues.

159 There was a schoolhouse there, but we turn 'em into a store after we
buy 'em. We put all our money together and open 'em up. And we call 'em
443 Progressive Club. We been growing and growing. We is still in debt, but
474 we are going on. And Mr. Jenkins, he is so good, he is so kind, so soft-
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159 185 873 to do something. They could take dictation and maybe could be hired in some of these lawyers' offices.

The principal told him that the boys and girls there don't have the aptitude for that kind of thing. In fact he said that on the national average the boys and girls who finish Haut Gap School are no more than about tenth grade scholars. So Mr. Johnson say, "I surprise to hear you say that, because it seem you ought to try to correct that kind of thing, if it be true."

The principal sent Mr. Johnson to the man who is the supervisor over the schools here on Johns Island. The supervisor told him that the typewriters would cost a lot of money. If he insist that his daughter or some other girls take typing and shorthand, they could go to the Negro high school on James Island. Mr. Johnson contention was that that would be too far away.

159 185 ● 177 873 Then I found out one day that the white high school on Johns Island had typing and shorthand. A white man came to my restaurant to fix the cigarette machine and said to me, "Esau, I congratulate you for sending your children to college." He said, "I couldn't send my daughter, but she has a good job. She works for one of the lawyers downtown."

I ask him, "Where did your daughter get her training?"

He said, "St. John's High."

I said, "St. John's High doesn't teach shorthand and typing."

He said, "Oh, yes it does. That's where my daughter learned and she's making good now."

Well that burn me a little bit when he told me that, so I brought it up that Sunday in the PTA, and I talk a long time about it. I told the principal and the teachers, "This is our children being hurt. I went all out for a high school here on Johns Island—I guess a lot of people were afraid to walk with me, some of my own race—because I was fighting white folks. Yet I was fighting that our tax money would be beneficial to our children. Now we need typewriters here. If we don't get it, certainly I'll try to find anybody who I know, as many as I know, to send to St. John's High School."

Well, I know they didn't want the Negroes to come there at that time, because you know this thing hadn't gotten full under way yet about integration. But we could make some trouble.

So I was told that Monday morning somebody rush to the superintendent's office and said, "You know, Esau talk a lot down there yesterday, and that crazy Negro say he'll send somebody to St. John's High School." He say, "The best thing you better do, you better try to get them typewriters."

So those typewriter came falling down in the school, overnight just

159 185 873 •177 about. I don't think they got the person to teach shorthand yet. Some of the teachers said it seemed like I was against them. I tell them, "I wasn't against any of you, but I asked you not to get in the way. You're not going to stand in the way of our children's education. You got yours."

Mr. Esau Jenkins

I AM TRYING TO GET HELP THROUGH THE WAR ON POVERTY

159 185 735 746

Because I feel there needs to be work here for our young people, and care for our children so their parents can also make a good wage, I am trying to get help through the War on Poverty.

I told the poverty committee that I am a native of Johns Island. I said that I have been working over the years trying to obliterate ignorance, to promote health, social, educational and civic welfare, and to combat juvenile delinquency and to secure a more rich and abundant life to ourselves and to our posterity. I told them that we have obligated ourselves and denied ourselves and begged and borrowed money to help build a center that our boys and girls and adults could have a place on the island where they can have games and workshops and where we have had some folk song festivals which have brought together people of both races.

Now our people are asking us to assist them in many areas in which we cannot give help unless we get some kind of grant. They are asking for day care for preschool children so that they do not have to keep older children home from school while the parents are out working. They are asking for classes which will help them to earn some kind of living here—sewing, crafts, adult remedial reading, music, some kinds of mechanical skills. They are asking for the creation of some jobs for children who have left school, and after-school jobs for school children.

These requests have come from parents who make from $800 to $2,000 a year and have from two to eight children in their homes.

If we receive the grant we have asked for, we can employ twelve or fourteen persons for the Progressive Club Sea Island Center's program—a director, assistant director, dietician, secretaries, teachers, assistants, and a janitor.

We promised the committee if they would give us this badly needed grant, which would help alleviate the cycle of poverty in this area, we are willing to do our part in seeing it become a reality.

Mr. William Saunders

WHEN YOU FINISH THIS HIGH SCHOOL, YOU AREN'T PREPARED FOR ANY JOB

177 829 882 Most of the kids that leave the island, I would say ninety percent of 'em go to New York. And to me, New York is about the worst place that any good youngster could go. They'll come back and tell you that they're living nice, everything is really nice. The young girls go away angels, have never had anything to do with a man, and they go away for about two years and come back with three babies. And a lot of the kids get to be addicts. Some of them do all right, come back driving big cars and really influencing the kids that are here to go away.

873 829 882 The kids that get college education, it might help them individually but it sure doesn't help this island. It seems like they forget from where they came, or what they've suffered through, and the help that the rest of the people need. And our schools don't offer what the kids need to go to college anyhow. Yet our kids will get out of school and won't come back home to try to help the kids to get what they really need to even go to college. You can be an A-student here on the island, which don't take very much, and go to college and be a C-student or even flunk out.

When you graduate from this high school you aren't prepared for any job, except farming. You can't borrow no money from the bank to start a farm of your own, so they just prepare you to work on a farm here. They now offer typing, but like my first cousin was an honor student at Haut Gap and her teacher told her that she was too smart to take typing and shorthand. She tried to get into this new Technical Educational Center here and she couldn't get in. So now she's in New York. I know she's an angel, but what's going to be her fate? We don't know. She wrote back home and told her daddy, "Please make sure my brothers and sisters (she got about six or seven) get shorthand and typing." So her daddy bought a typewriter and got everybody in the house typing now.

Rev. G. C. Brown

829 464 882

IF WE COULD ONLY KEEP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HERE

If we could only keep our young people here, but now when they finish high school, most of 'em go. They don't stay here to help you develop things. They're looking for better wages—fact, they have to do that. There's

Mr. William Saunders

GOING TO NEW YORK IS AN ADVANTAGE AND A DISADVANTAGE

593 Most people think about their kids. It's so hard raising kids in New
464 York. And it's so easy for kids to go bad there. So most of the kids are left
● 177 here with the grandparents while the parents are in New York working, and
when they get a certain age they think about it. And they rebel. They find
something bad to do. They try to get back somehow at their parents.

Most of the people that go away from here leave their kids. If the wife
[855] and the husband are going to be working, they have nobody to care for the
kids, so they leave them home. And the grandparents have gotten to a cer-
(603) tain age, they raised their kids, and they're so much more lenient on their
grandkids than they were on their own kids. So this is one of the real big
problems, I think. The kids suffer.

I was born in New York. I was one of these babies that was shipped
855 here—not even somebody bringing me, they used to put tags on you and
603 just put you on the train and say where you're supposed to get off at. I was
177 raised by my grandparents and actually when a grandparent raise a kid,
there are two generations between, and there's so much less understanding
[593] there. Things that the parents would probably understand, the grandparents
cannot understand. And this was my problem.

This is something that is still going on, and I think it's gonna be going on and on. And this is one of the things that the Negroes have really been suffering from—this grandparents raising the children and the children not getting actually what they need. I believe if a kid really wants something, like he wants music lessons or he wants to study farming, or anything, if they say that they *want* to do it, I think that somebody should be there to help them with it. So even if they fail, they can't say, "I didn't have the opportunity." I think he should have the right to try, and if he fails, he can't blame nobody but himself because he just couldn't make it.

But like me now, I can sit back and blame my grandparents and my parents for not being successful. I don't know, I just feel to me that I could have been somebody. And I got somebody to blame for not being somebody.

Kids here need an opportunity.

464 Going to New York is a disadvantage and an advantage. To live I think
it's a disadvantage. Some things are lacking here, but the children have a
177 home. So we don't have everything that we want for them. But they have
855 their home, so all they need is to get along like everybody else—daily living.

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And it really shouldn't be that hard. The pay here is less, but you don't have to pay rent, and the food is cheaper. They go to New York and then they come back here on their vacation and tell you how silly you are to be here. And what they bring here is a new car, but then you have a car and you have a house, so what is it they're bringing? They're making more but they're spending more. But yet you're here with your kids, and they aren't. 464 177

And really they miss everything about home up there. That's why you find Christmas times or holiday times they don't want to be in New York, they want to be home. They miss the atmosphere, the friendliness of the people. You can go to anybody's house, the people don't have no money in the bank, they don't have no money under their mattress, but they got a whole lot of food. I don't believe there's a house around here where they ain't got a whole lot of food, got a little moonshine to drink on the holidays. 464 177 571

A lot of my friends say if they could make even thirty dollars a week less than they make in New York they would come back home.

4: Carawan & Carawan   B,Z-5 (1959-1988)   1989
NN23   Sea Islanders   NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Abraham Jenkins

GOD AIN'T MAKING NO MORE LAND

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Land on these islands got to be so valuable because of the development projects on Kiawah and Seabrook. At one time you could get an acre of land for less than fifty dollars. Now land costs a lot more. It's almost impossible to buy land now. We got people out here now that come to buy with cash money. This is a way of enticing and influencing people because people have spent all their lives trying to make some money and here this guy walks up to you with rolls of thousand dollar bills circled by hundreds and five hundreds and starts talking. Many of these people just want to take the money and I can understand it. But you have to let them know that God ain't making no more land, and if you got any, you better hold onto it and try to work some other type of arrangement like long-term leasing. Sometimes you can be land-rich, but you can lose it all.

Black land is a threat to further development. It's slowing things down. I'll give you an example of how these developers operate. There is a black family that used to own about seventy-nine acres of land on Johns Island. The land developers were out there like buzzards trying to find an heir to that property that would not have any interest in the property. In this particular case the heir was somebody in New York and the developer said, "I will give

you X amount of dollars for what you own on Johns Island." He said, "Man, 423
what are you talking about? I have never been to Johns Island." The devel- 177
oper said, "Yes, but you own something down there." The developer looked 425
like Santa Claus to him and he just went on and took the money.

The developer took the signed agreement into probate court and started suing for partition. They couldn't agree on how to divide the seventy-nine acres. The court said since the relatives could not agree who was going to get the swamp, who was going to get the waterfront, who was going to get whatever, then the whole property should be sold and the money divided.

The developer wanted the whole thing anyway. When he signed the piece of paper for whatever he owned, he became a member of the family. He would not agree to any settlement. When they had the partition sale, he had someone come and outbid the rest of the family.

We're planning quarterly land workshops now so that people can learn 423
more about how to protect their land.

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Mr. William Saunders

WHAT I TALK TO PEOPLE ON THE ISLAND ABOUT IS POOLING OUR RESOURCES

● 177 There's no way that the island can stay unchanged. It's already changed. There was a time when I knew everybody on the island. I can't say that anymore. There's been such an influx of new people in the last ten years. There's a real new sense of direction there. The new people can always take advantage of the older people. Hopefully, we can control some of the change.

For the first time in my lifetime, the white and black communities have come together. Some of the whites who hated my guts back when you guys were there now are using me sometimes as spokesman to the county government. Some of them who would never have spoken to me, I've been in meetings with them and they'll say, "Let Mr. Saunders explain that." There's a
[179] Johns Island planning committee to look at what needs to be changed. I think
we might be able to maintain our roads—if we could get some cutoffs on the
[491] roads, where those big farm vehicles or the school bus can pull over for the
traffic—and if we can do it *and* save the big trees.

.000 I wish I was in a position to get a group of people together to buy up a good bit of the land that is for sale on Johns Island. Some of it I would like to just sit. Some of it you could build the things that need to be done. I would like to see a nice Holiday Inn–type motel over there. There are so many people from the island that are living away from here that come home and their family don't have a house large enough for them to stay in. And they don't want to stay in the city, so they just crowd in together. But if you had a real nice hotel and just a nice restaurant, you could make money on it. There are so many things that could be done.

What I talk to people on the island about is pooling our resources to build the things that will be built on Johns Island. It can be done, but we would have to trust each other.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mr. Abraham Jenkins

PEOPLE DON'T SEE THAT "BIG SANTA CLAUS" THEY ONCE THOUGHT OF

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464 People saw what happened when all that money came in with Kiawah and yet no one that I know got in any of those administrative positions out there. You find a few people got into the more menial jobs. Ninety percent of the jobs are in the lowest level, and then maybe five to ten percent are in a higher bracket, but not up in the really well-paid bracket. So people don't see that "big Santa Claus" they once thought of.

Mr. William Saunders

THEY WERE NEVER CONCERNED ABOUT THE PEOPLE THAT LIVE ON THOSE ISLANDS

185 I get pretty upset about things. There was a million dollars spent on turtles on Kiawah, because these people were concerned about the turtles. But they were never concerned about the people that live on those islands.

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(178) Still, as long as I can get some help from those people, then I don't have any problem with their lives. The moment all those rich people begin staying on Kiawah and Seabrook, they begin to improve the roads. Although it was built for them, I use it. It's accessible to everyone. And the people on Kiawah and Seabrook are pretty much conservationists, so they back most anything leaving things the way they are.

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Mr. Abraham Jenkins

THE PEOPLE WERE TREATED SO BADLY

758 Prior to the establishment of the Sea Island Comprehensive Health Care
743 Corporation there was no medical care on the islands and everybody had to
go to the emergency room in Charleston. The people were treated so badly
177 by the nurses and sometimes the physicians. It was segregated there. And
[741] many people died trying to get to medical care waiting on the bridges to open
and close.

758 My father was a fighter. In my case, I retired as a major in the air force in
1971 and moved back home. I figured I'd come back to give my daddy help. I
185 was in a position to help him do some things. I grew up around this work and I guess I would have come back eventually. I spoke to my daddy. He never said I should come back, but just the way he spoke, I knew I should. After talking to some other people, I knew the work needed to be done. When I looked at the groundwork that had been laid by these people, and saw the intensity of their effort and how much sacrifice had been made, I know I said to myself, "I gave the military twenty years, I can give Sea Island twenty." Several of us started trying to put a health program together for the islands.

Mr. Abraham Jenkins

PEOPLE STARTED SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

758 Our community consists of the sea islands west and south of Charles-
74 ton—five islands altogether. So when we started looking at the needs of the
people, we tried to organize a local health council on each of these islands.
628 Either we created or we got to be a part of an existing organization on each
185 island. We started getting input from all of the islands and we started trying to meet their needs. We eventually started dealing with environmental issues, social work, health education, and nutrition.

758 When some people became interested in the problems of migrant work-
ers on the islands, Rev. Goodwin, my daddy, Bill Saunders, McKinley Wash-
74 ington, and others said, "Well, it's all right to be doing something for the
177 migrants, but whatever the migrants are experiencing for six or eight weeks,
185 the people on the islands are experiencing for the whole year. So whatever we
do, it should not be limited just to the migrants." Some of the first issues that were identified were health issues.

They decided they needed to form a rural organization that would deal with these problems the people were having. That was the beginning of Rural Missions, Inc. It started out of the Progressive Club and was formed to address local issues on Johns Island. But then people started seeing the bigger picture and the similarity of the situation on the other islands.

Mr. Gerald Mackey

BLACK YOUTH NEED POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

156 Many of the problems that young people face—substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, illiteracy, suicide attempts—are a direct result of these young people having a poor self-image and low self-esteem. So the first step in finding a solution is helping these young people to feel good about themselves. A lot of the young people are insecure. They fall prey to peer pressure because they don't feel good about themselves. They don't love themselves for one reason or another.

156 Black youth need positive role models. When you look at the television or read the newspapers, or the history books, blacks are rarely shown in a
554 positive light. As a result many of the young people feel that blacks have not made any significant contribution to America. That causes them to feel negatively about themselves and about their ancestors.

156 I attended a segregated elementary school and a segregated high school on Johns Island. My childhood dream was to become a teacher. My black
554 teachers were my role models and I always looked up to them. These people
871 worked extremely hard with the boys and girls on Johns Island—giving us
(177) lots of support and encouragement. They cared enough about us to go the extra mile in spite of the limited resources that were given to black schools at that time.

The most important influence in my life was my mother, Ms. Wilhelmina Mackey, who died this year. My mother wanted her children to be educated and to "make something" of themselves. She was a stern disciplinarian. She took a no-nonsense approach to education and social behavior.
(177) Because of the Jim Crow laws of the South, and because of extenuating circumstances, she did not have the opportunity to get a high school education. She went only as far as the eighth grade, but she was a smart woman. She worked hard to have her children educated. And she also saw to it that God and religion played a very important role in our lives. My mother's strong desire to see us succeed helped me to develop self-discipline at an early age.

156 I would urge young people today to develop self-discipline in all aspects of life. They need the initiative to move ahead and do those things that should be done.

871 At Wesley, we've set up a weekly communitywide tutorial session. The response to that program has been overwhelming. We have people who have specialized in all subjects coming in to work on an individual basis with kids so that they could get the time and the attention they need.

185 I believe that those of us who have been blessed by God, and have been fortunate enough to be successful, have a moral responsibility to help those less fortunate than ourselves—especially the young people. We need to concentrate on working with our youth, because they are our future.

Mr. Gerald Mackey

YOU NEVER KNOW THE NUMBER OF LIVES YOU TOUCH

871 875 [464] [177] The employment situation for young people nationwide is extremely frustrating. I work with the division of personnel for the Charleston County School District. We have problems getting black teachers in the school system. For example, Charleston County hired approximately 224 teachers at the beginning of the school year and approximately 21 of the 224 were black. When you look at the racial composition of the district, you have more black than white students. So we have a problem with black teachers and administrators coming into the district. It's one of the reasons why the desegregation suit brought by the Justice Department and others is now going on.

[554] In some schools in the county, we have no black teachers. In some of the larger schools, you might have two or three. There is no equity in student-teacher ratio in terms of black and white. So the kids have very few black role models in terms of teachers. That's a very sad indictment on a system when kids come up from kindergarten through high school and not see a black teacher. Another argument that we make in the county is that blacks are not going into teaching. They're considering other options like science or math, and they're going into the industries. They're studying computer science and engineering and medicine, and they're not going into teaching. But it's going to be sad again for the kids.

I wouldn't trade my experience of being a classroom teacher for anything in the world. You never know the number of lives you touch. Teaching is very rewarding.

Mr. Abraham Jenkins

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I THINK THAT'S A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

With the Sea Island Health Care Corporation, the Citizens' Committee, the Ministerial Alliance, Johns Island's going to be a better place to live. With the dedication we have now we have turned that exodus of young people leaving the island around. We have seen some engineers and attorneys and professional people coming back home to live. And if they're not living here, they're still making a contribution by coming back periodically, making their presence known, sharing their knowledge, or making a financial contribution. There's much more of that now than there was ten years ago. I think that's a step in the right direction.

Mrs. Idell Smalls

I WANT THE YOUTH TO BE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHERE WE'RE FROM

159 I was born on Yonges Island. My mother was a farm worker, my father an oyster picker. I attended elementary and high school here on the island, but my family could not afford to send me to college. Instead I worked on the farm and restaurants to help my mother raise six children. I married and lived for a time in Washington, D.C. I returned to the island for a visit and decided it was time to move home.

159 In 1985 I had the opportunity to go to Nairobi, Kenya. I had an experi-
177 ence that is hard to put into words. Being there, I could feel, smell, and
relive my childhood through tradition, dialect, customs, and being able to
look at my people there in Nairobi and see my family in South Carolina in
159 their faces. On returning home I wanted to instill in the youth and adults the
importance of holding onto our heritage and African customs, because not
186 many of us will ever get to Africa to experience what I did. I wanted the youth
178 to be proud of who we are and where we're from.

191 The trip helped me address some of the problems our teens were having,
such as being teased about the Gullah dialect, which is a mixture of African
197 and American speech. We began to develop a play called "In Celebration of
536 Us." Each teen adopted a senior at the senior center and began interviewing
883 her about her life. The teens wrote and produced the play.

We're focusing on changing images and instilling self-respect in the young adults of the sea islands through economic and cultural survival development.

4: Carawan & Carawan B,Z-5 (1959-1988) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN2
South Carolina
Johns Island

Mrs. Janie Hunter

I FOUND OUT I HAD SOMETHING I DIDN'T KNOW I HAD MYSELF

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When we started to travel, we had a lot of criticism. Everyone didn't like it, but that didn't stop me. They didn't understand. I try to let them know that when we're doing these different programs, it really establish Johns Island. We put Johns Island on the map.

And I was carrying my children since they was six and seven years old. My children hardly be bashful. They really experienced something and they learned a lot. They went to Rhode Island twice; they went to New York. And several times to the Smithsonian in Washington. They learned to face people and be what you are.

I enjoyed every bit of it. The travel taught me a lot. I saw places I wished for many years I could see. My dream did come true. When I was young I hoped I could travel and see something, and I did. I learned something in traveling that I never learned in school. You couldn't tell if we were black or white from the treatment we got. That means a lot. Treatment is what cause love.

So I feel good about it because I could show somebody something that they didn't know. Although they finished college and have education, I feel like I have something that they wanted. I found out I had something I didn't know I had myself. And that makes me feel like going on with it. And if there's anything I can do to help somebody learn something they don't know, I'll be glad to do it.

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Mr. William Saunders

THE CULTURAL THING IS SOMETHING THAT CAN ALWAYS GO ON

527 When we had the festivals on Johns Island back in the sixties with the
829 folk from Moving Star Hall, the Georgia sea islands, and the young freedom
[545] singers, nothing was happening in isolation. It was a time in history when a
lot was going on—voter registration, awareness, blacks were about being
black. Everything fit in, and the festival was like the tape that brings a lot of
things together. It really kept people's spirits up, and that is what was needed
[791] at that particular time. We needed to draw on each other. The religious aspect of it was key. Most of the white community around here really don't
understand the strength of something like that.

468 For instance, the Hospital Workers' strike just grew out of that whole
thing. The same singing went on in all the things we were organizing. It never
829 changed. It stayed the same. The song is sung according to the mood of the
533 people that day. And very rarely the same words are used. The tempo is
different depending on whether it's sad or happy. You cannot really capture
that.

527 I think the festivals we did were really a benefit and a strength to the
829 community itself. It was the only legitimate place that blacks and whites
could get together. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was part of our
● 177 expression for that time. It would not be workable today, because all of those
things are not in place anymore. You would have to have a different reason.

Now you would have it based on culture. If it were to be more than that,
829 that thrust would have to be defined. When we did it back in the sixties, the
political thrust was already there. We knew exactly who our enemy was. We
didn't have any question about what was right and what was wrong.

But the cultural thing is something that can always go on. And there are so many young people that have been left out of that era. So if you do it from a historical perspective, it's workable.

Today Mrs. Russell talks about not being able
● 177 to visit her old crabbing spot; she is kept from her
178 homeplace by guards and gates. Ms. Elaine Jenkins straddles the old and new ways trying to show people how not to lose their land. Bill Saunders talks about development and change in a way that is based on his dreams for the indigenous people of the island community; the new developers, on the contrary, want to keep the people off the new vacation spots unless they are employed there, usually in menial jobs.

741 Today's Sea Island Comprehensive Health
178 Care Corporation grew out of the Rural Mission,
758 Inc., and the Progressive Club, begun by Esau Jenkins and nurtured by those who struggled with him to bring about change. Their efforts gave much to the local community and to the larger movement. This was the home of the first citizenship
871 education class; "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize,
533 Hold On" passed from Alice Wine to Guy Carawan
668 to the Nashville sit-ins to movement communities throughout the South.

To walk through this book again is to walk
128 through time. The first edition of the book intro-
121 duced us to the old songs and the Moving Star Hall and its worship tradition. It described the islanders' yearnings and planning for change. The Carawans were beginning to share the music and culture of this community through folk festivals and programs throughout the nation. In this first book one feels the storm of change in the sound of a unique nineteenth-century black American voice.

And now we have this new edition of the book loaded with some of the same voices speaking through yet another decade; and we see and hear the voices and concerns of the children who walk and seek to extend their roads. We see the out-
177 siders with intentions that have nothing to do with
178 the survival of the communities they found as they moved into the islands. The questions and fears are for the youth and their future. Their voices are heard only as whispers in the minds and hearts of their parents. The questions are: Will they continue? And how and where and what of this rich legacy will they harvest to pass on?

(P.236-B)

Bernice Johnson Reagon

000 skilled in bad weather. The best of the inhabitable land
423 has been owned by two or three black families since the last
half of the nineteenth century. Most of the present inhabi-
602 tants are related to each other, at least distantly. A few
177 white sportsmen have established hunting lodges on the unin-
habited portions of the island, and a land development company
has been draining some marshes in order to build waterfront
resort homes. At the time of the present study, however, all
101 people present on a daily basis on the island were members
186 of the black community. The island is well-known to residents
of Georgetown County, even though few have visited it. It
is generally considered to be a mysterious and somewhat back-
ward place. High school students tell of being teased about
coming from the island and being looked upon as somehow dif-
ferent and perhaps unsophisticated. Teachers in mainland
schools note the close friendships between island children
and the in-group humor characteristic of them; some teachers
consider their language distinctive, but others do not.

243 Historically, the economy of the island was based
433 upon rice. Once at least nine major plantations flourished
(464) there, worked and probably managed largely by black labor.
Few of the white owners made permanent homes on the island,
probably no more than two families at any one time. The
(423) majority of the land remains in the hands of white individual
owners or corporations, but they remain absentee owners.
Long after rice had ceased to be a major factor in the rest

000 tions introduced by *to* in earlier English for similar reasons. Jespersen (1940) notes that *for* preceding *to* + Verb originally expressed the notion of 'purpose,' though in time this construction came to be merely the equivalent of the *to*-infinitive. He cites parallel developments in certain Scandinavian dialects; in Skåne, *för till att* marks infinitives of purpose. Visser (1966) speculates that the use of *for to* with adverbial infinitives may have arisen in Middle English either because by that time the directive force of *to* was too much toned down, or from a trend to reinforce the directive force of this complementizer. He cites other pre-infinitival phrases used, as evidence for such a re-inforcing trend: *for þat entent to*, *in purpose to*, *in order to*. In a computational study of the infinitive used from Old to Modern English (including certain forms not marked by a complementizer), Appleby (1967) discerns no pattern in the variation between *to* and *for to* during the Middle English period. She does find that, by Early Modern English, *for to* was used primarily with nouns and adverbs. The 'adverb' classification used by Appleby is the one closest to the 'purposive' classification used here for Gullah infinitival clauses.

19 From the discussion of the speech community (Chapter
177 2), it should be clear that the type of English most likely to be heard by early Gullah speakers was not the standard Early Modern English of London. If many West African immigrants had already learned Gullah in African ports before

19 being transported to the Carolina colony, as Hancock (1975)
177 suggests, the English which contributed to the development of the African-based creole was not that of the standard variety, either. Traugott's history of English syntax (1972) notes the importance of certain similarities between the English spoken by some Americans of West African ancestry today and that of seventeenth-century northern England and Scotland. So far as the complementizer is concerned, it is conceivable that the nonstandard for to or even for was the variant used in the kind of English heard by the early immigrants from Africa. Or that these were among the variants heard.

193 The heavy retention of fɛ for purposive clauses in Gullah, even as the change to standard forms for the complementizer in other environments is almost complete, argues for another explanation for the original choice of fɛ as complementizer than simply a dialectal one. Evidence from standard English and from other creoles points to the close relationship between particles used as prepositions or case markers to indicate notions of purpose and possession, and between homonymous particles having a complementizing function. In an influential discussion of factive and nonfactive predicates, Kiparsky and Kiparsky (1970) noted the close association between certain types of infinitival con-
000 structions and non-factive predicates. In a subsequent examination of psychological predicates in English, Aijmer

000 overlapped throughout the major historical stages of English, so did the uses of to and at as locative prepositions. The Oxford English Dictionary has citations for to expressing simple position from as early as 925 and extending as late as 1901; this use of to for indicating static location is labeled as 'dial. and U. S. colloq' for Modern English. The use of at for expressing notions of 'motion toward' is labeled 'obsolete.' A citation for such use is given from as late as 1528, however. The use of at for pre-infinitival complementizer in dialects of northern England was mentioned in Section 4.1. Within the larger Germanic family of languages, the two lexical items to and at have long overlapped. In Modern German and Dutch, at is lost and its place largely taken by a form of to. In Scandinavian, to is lost, with at taking over the function of complementizer before the infinitive. Because of the variation between to and at in earlier English, particularly for nonstandard dialects, it is reasonably certain that early Gullah speakers would have been exposed to some variation in the use of these locative prepositions. Such variation has persisted even into the twentieth century; as late as 1960 the use of static-to was recorded in the speech of residents of a remote North Carolina island settled by English pilots and their families in the early 1700's (Morgan, 1960). I myself heard older white speakers of coastal South Carolina use it in informal conversation during 1974. Kurath (1949), however, reports

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193 that the use of static-*to* is not frequent in this area for
• 177 an idiomatic expression like *sick at my stomach*, and Bryant (1962) reports studies of the expression *to home* which indicate heavy usage of static-*to* in rural New England but relatively infrequent use in the Southern states. From these sketchy reports, it seems reasonable to assume that static-*to* could be heard in early Carolina English, but that *at* was at least equally frequent. Despite this variation for English speakers, Turner's 1949 texts indicate that *to* was used almost exclusively by Gullah speakers for the expression of both static and dynamic locative relationships. The question arises as to why *to*, rather than *at*, was chosen for the expression of such relationships.

000 There exists no clear preference for static-*to* in other English creoles. The Caribbean creoles which derive from contact between English and African languages have a division of the semantic space 'locative' which is roughly similar to that of Gullah (see Traugott, 1974 on Barbadian and Trinidadian English Creoles). One lexical item is used to indicate both static location and movement toward *ego*. The Caribbean creole for which the greatest amount of data exist, Jamaican, apparently uses *at* for both static and dynamic notions (Cassidy, 1961; Bailey, 1966; Cassidy and LePage, 1967). There is much variation in all these creoles, but *at* is the preposition most favored for the indication of both static and motional notions; *to* is used to express

193 spatial ones and which are never expressed by static-*to*.

As lexical items, the creole variants seem to have
193 their own individual histories, even though all seem clearly
•177 to be English in origin. The complementizer *fE* is likely
to derive from English *for*, used as complementizer in earlier stages and in some modern dialects of English. The widespread use of a similar particle as both case marker and complementizer in other English-related pidgins and creoles suggests that a more universal process underlies the choice of this particle as complementizer, however (see Washabaugh's 1975 discussion of *fo* in a variety of West African Pidgin English, *fi* in Providence Island Creole and in the creole of San Andres Island in Colombia, *fi* in Jamaican Creole, *fi* and *fu* in Guyanese Creole, and *fo* in Hawaiian Creole). The pronouns *ee* and *Em* probably come from English *he* and *him*, but their use for all genders has no parallel in any dialect of English. The underlying categories marked by these creole forms, which differ from those categories marked by similar forms in Jamaican and Guyanese creoles, may reflect the structure of West African languages different from those languages serving as source languages for the Caribbean creoles. Finally, the *to* used as static locative preposition is undoubtedly English in origin and has the strongest claim for direct lineage from those English dialects which use *to* in a similar fashion. Older white speakers in rural South Carolina can still be found

5: Nichols L-5 (no date) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
Georgetown

193 using to with the meaning of 'static location.' The use of
177 at and by with the meaning of both 'static location' and 'dynamic movement toward' by creole speakers in the Caribbean may indicate the early presence there of speakers of different English dialects, perhaps originating in northern England and Ireland. Although the variants used for static locative preposition in South Carolina and the Caribbean may derive ultimately from dialectal varieties of English common to those two parts of the world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the reduced inventory of locative prepositions common to both Gullah and the Caribbean English creoles seems related more to the typology of creoles than to dialectal variation in English.

464 no use of standard English and which entail little inter-
562 *action with a diverse public. The top five jobs held by*
197 black men in the region are blue collar and require few
463 language-related tasks. Jobs held by island men and by
mainland men of the lower socio-economic group are roughly
similar blue collar laboring jobs. Those held by mainland
men may require fewer skills than the construction jobs
held by island men, but none entail daily use of a standard
variety of English to any great extent. Mainland and island
women, however, have had strikingly different employment
patterns and educational opportunities. Mainland women in
the group studied have been confined to domestic service or
field labor with a limited number of employers. One of
these women had lived on a single plantation all of her
eighty years, working for one family most of that time. She
had had no formal education and could neither read nor write.
[212] No woman born on the island was illiterate. Domestic jobs
held by island women were varied, ranging from jobs in resort
motels to work for middle-class families in mainland com-
munities. Women who had become teachers had moved off the
island to be nearer their jobs in mainland schools. In the
[177] middle aged and younger group of women from the island, some
had obtained jobs as clerks in mainland stores in the past
decade and interacted daily with the diverse tourist popula-
tion which visits coastal South Carolina in the summers.
One woman served as mail carrier for a small mainland

159 telling why there are not more of his generation around now to keep company he says "en d last years I ca'n waak lik I en d past. Dey'll be many mo ob ma time round here da dae, butbiln d white man's bridges and railroad kill musa us out. Wen dem come from d railroad waak dey body wae dead. I tri ta tel dem ta lern to make lik waak, but dey mules n at age fifty dey waz tiad ole men. Oderwize dey'll be many mo ob ma people wete me tadae."

159 461 Reverend Gripe.--The right Reverend Gripe differentiated between human and inhuman labor. Born in 1893, this man refused to work for the large white farmers. He worked and maintained his own land, but when there was an extra penny in "fightin d white man field" he refused. Once he went to lime house store (Captain Limehouse, the head of a powerful family in the area) to buy steak meat. Captain Limehouse a noted nigger whipper asked "where a nigger git steak money?" The six foot three inch two hundred plus pound Reverend Gripe replied "by not waakin ya fields," at which Limehouse laughed and dismissed the Reverend as crazy. Taking insult the Reverend jumped in his new Nash automobile and went then and thereafter to the city for his steak meat.

177 RACE RELATIONS ON THE ISLANDS

Now with bridges and interconnecting paved roadways the Sea Islands have been recognized as ideal for suburban living. Consequently in the past five years there has been an onslaught of Whites moving onto the Islands. Whites as a result of this migration are the majority population on Johns in addition to James Island. The coming of Whites to the Sea Island has not, as in earlier migration, been limited to the two islands close to Charleston City. The number of Whites on the three most distant islands has also steadily increased during the past decade. The areas surrounding central Charleston report a growth of 33.9% during this period. In 1960, 65% of Charlestons county's population lived outside the central city; by 1970 this percentage increased to 72.1.

Whites, the Islands new population, have generally concentrated their living to the waterfront acreage of the islands. As this acreage is diminished and the number of Whites increased, suburban developments are emerging on the inland acreage. So far this trend is particularly the case for James and Johns Islands.

The illustration of an incident in the life of Reverend Gripe is by no means isolated. There are Black families who have never conformed to the colonial status to which they have been assigned. Then there are islanders who follow and swallow wholeheartedly the deficatous trails and tales of the "bossman system."

●177 579 Only twice since the turn of the century has there been a large scale threat of open conflict between the races. The earliest threat was in 1922 and was caused by the beating of a Black woman on the island by a White man. The island's men set out to retaliate. Whites were attacked and beaten in Charleston and atmosphere was tense throughout the county. Then in 1970 the city sanitation and hospital workers went on strike. As the months past without much movement toward settling the disagreements the Black now jobless community became increasingly tensed and similar repeats of attacks on Whites by Blacks were reported.

177 The relationship between the races has never been
"peaches and cream." Because Whites maintain a tight hold
on the economic patterns on the islands, islanders are to
some degree reluctant to physically express their feelings.
[579] Shooting incidents between the races, while not common, can
be anticipated from time to time. The older islanders who
[466 have slaved in the fields of the large farmers have not
[465] forgotten the degrading condition under which they were
economically obligated to function for some thirty-five
cents per day. Younger islanders, also well aware of this
history, simply refuse to repeat the pattern. The extent
to which they are successful in breaking down the colonial
economic patterns on the island will determine the future
of Blacks on the Sea Islands.

362 There are also those units which are adequately furnished, and contain inside plumbing facilities. These homes tend to be new or recently improved. Built during the 1950's, more of the middle age islanders live in houses of this type.

Some sections contain new or recently built homes; these are more rarely seen and tend to be occupied by islanders in their late twenties and thirties who have been employed at an adequate wage over a period of years.

A SUMMATION STATEMENT

177 178 The roots of exploitation are deep on the Sea Islands. That information and those program services which would help ease the yokes of oppression are but slowly being metered into the community. In the mist of this oppression, the islanders continue to show spirited strength in maintaining traditional family patterns and the unique customs. They are not diving foolishly into imitation of the suburban elements to which they are gaining greater exposure. Certainly features of the suburban life style are and will continue to be adopted into native family patterns. But these elements will be added with modification. It is too early to speculate on the forms these modifications will take. However, it is rather certain that those elements of suburbanization which would drastically effect the traditional functioning and design of island families-if, ventured into

177 at all, will, in coming, have to be made consistent with
178 and have minimal impact on the family as it now exists.

178 No doubt, the continued existence of the Sea Islands as an exclusively Black community will be difficult to retain. The extent to which the Sea Islands retain their unique Black character will hinge on the economic resourcefulness of the younger islanders and on whether those who have left are willing to return and reclaim their Sea Island heritage.

121 cohesiveness than in Sea Island society.

The following quote by Crum rather clearly notes the Gullah people as a unique research population:

> In a very real sense the history of these people furnishes a key to the whole race situation in America. In their isolation the Gullahs provide materials for an interesting social study. It is significant that nowhere on the continent can a purer African culture be found. Until recent years the whole area has been cut off from the rest of the world. The cultural and geographical isolation of these (blacks) offers an absolutely unique situation to the student interested in human relations.[8]

PRIOR GULLAH RESEARCH

121
197 The Gullah dialect and studies of folk beliefs are the features of Sea Island communities which have been most frequently researched. The earlier studies aimed at isolating the origin of Gullah identified the dialect as a corrupted form of old English learned from lowly European immigrants.[9] On the other hand, Crum[10] proposes that the
[576]
[177] extraordinary politeness and gentle manners which have

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[8] Mason Crum, Gullah: Negro Life in the Carolina Sea Islands (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1950), p. 3.

[9] Ambrose Gonzales, Black Borders, Columbia, S. C., 1922; Krapp, The English of the Negro, American Mercury, June, 1924; H. L. Mencken, The American Language, N. Y., 1936 ed.; Reed Smith, Gulliah, Bulletin of the University of South Carolina #190, 1926.

[10] Cru, op. cit., p. 4.

121 become characteristic of Sea Islanders were a result of
197 early exposure to "cultured" White plantation owners. The
[576] conflicting feature of these two notions is evident.
[177] Turner's research cleared up much of the confusion relative
to the origin of Gullah.[11] His report that the dialect is
highly reflective of linguistic systems common to West
Africa provides a geographical origin of Gullah Blacks.
121 That the Gullah dialect has features which are identifiable
197 as distinctly West African linguistic habits is consistent
174 with the research which places West Africa as the origin of
the Gullah Blacks. Donnan[12] offers the following list as
illustrative of the African origin of Sea Islanders;

Gambia to Sierra Leone
Liberia and the Ivory Coast
  (Rice and Grain Coasts)
Guinea Coast (Gold Coast to Calabar)
Angola and the Congo

121 Herskovits, Crum and others propose that the rela-
174 tively recent arrival of West Africans to the Sea Islands
178 and the isolation of these islands has been conducive to
the retention of African cultural elements. Herskovits
suggests that the last population of Africans coming directly to the Charleston Sea port was about 1850. Researchers are in agreement that nowhere in the United States

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[11] Lorenzo Turner, Africanism in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago, 1949).

[12] E. Donnan, The Slave Trade into South Carolina before the Revolution, Am. Hist. Rev. 33: 804-828, 1927-28.

121 178 African origin.[16] It seems quite clear that Sea Islanders
have (with modifications) retained cultural patterns which
are unmistakingly West African in origin. However, the
121 177 178 extents and directions of cultural adaptation of Sea
Islander--as a consequence of the American experience--is
open to question. Certainly, Sea Islanders have not assimilated the American ethos to the extent evident among
northern urban Blacks, but no doubt the Sea Islands as a
cultural entity is in a state of change. In warning that
the Gullah dialect may be unintelligible to Blacks outside
of that particular linguist community, Dalby[17] indirectly
suggests that the assimilation of Gullah Blacks to mainland
(U.S.) cultural norms has been slow. It seems that as more
U.S. Blacks strive toward greater identification with their
African heritage, the assimilation rates and the resulting
cultural adaptations evident among Sea Islanders becomes
inceasingly important as a means of gaining retrospective
insights on the processes of de-Africanization.

12 178 The related and important question of the present investigation is whether in addition to the retention of
linguistic Africanisms Sea Islanders also retain other

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[16] Elsie C. Parson, Folklore of the Sea Islands, South Carolina in Folklore Society (Cambridge, Mass.: 1923).

[17] David Dably, "Levels of Relationship in the Comparative Study of African Languages," African Language Society (1966), pp. 171-179.

121 particularly of the status accorded are reflective of West
178 African family and tribal traditions. Among West African
855 tribes, it is a general rule that elders are charged with
the responsibility of maintaining and teaching the tribe
and family linkage and histories. In this role, elders
act as judges of whether younger parents are rearing chil-
dren in the traditional mold. Sea Island elders are charged
with similar responsibilities. In earlier times, the island
121 elders were responsible for making and interpreting the
627 Black law. Disputes between neighbors or families were
623 settled by indigenous elder councils. Only disputes which
[177] drew the attention of the White world were brought to the
[692] White man's court. The isolation of the Sea Islands often
made the elder councils of each island the primary legal
body. Likewise, the few numbers of Whites inhabiting the
islands supported the functioning of the elder councils.

623 Although their functions have been limited, the elder
888 Sea Island councils have been retained to date. The extent
178 to which the high status accorded elders in the Sea Island
121 household has changed, as a consequence of assimilation can
[177] only be postulated. Similarly, the literature offers few
clear statements on commonality of roles and of attitudes
toward elders found among Sea Island and West African
121 parents. Finally, there are few statements comparing Sea
855 Island and West African child rearing practices.

861 mannerism of the child was extremely unjust. They say the
[771] teachings of the Lord make clear that if the parent blindly
[593] follows the bully path results in the child losing respect. In this belief, parents with guided deliberation employ the discipline interaction.

It must be emphasized that these interactions are just
[577] not that frequent. Gullah children are respectful and obedient, behaviors which are less than that are not tolerated. In turn rarely does the Gullah parent discipline the child who has been socialized properly.

The Gullah parent on the nearer islands agreed that the
861 properly socialized child is not a problem. This child is
•177 on the right path. But they are concerned about factors in the environment which act to make for proper rearing of children increasingly difficult. As these parents see it and as was supported by the study, on the nearer islands the effects of greater exposure to mainland life styles makes it increasingly difficult to rear children to "the proper" levels of obedience. Elder Richardson explains the situation this way: "d paren should be shami while d roun en de high skire, lib en n out of sin. D chillin got no choice dan ta act lik d paren. It ain't d chilln falt mind ya, it d blame ob d paren. Dey responsible fer d chil, dey must brin d chil ta d wae ob d bible. I jus dan't no waat goina happen ta d chilln ta dae. Ef d paren dan't see ta

861 it quik, dey is head fer d fira en brim stan. But it ain't
177 dey falt."

861 184 177 The relationship being described here explains the higher tolerance of today's parents and is explicable in part by generational differences and in part by the exposure element-distance from mainland. In the case of exposure, the more distant Gullah families are more isolated from the mainland socializing influences. An effect of this more limited exposure is more adherence to "the discipline habits of ole." This adherence was reflected in the lower tolerance (reaction ratio) of parents on the distant islands. In further explanation, the work habits of women on the near islands contribute to their being the most tolerant parents. The occupational habits of these women frequently take them into the households of White families of higher economic status. When this Gullah parent is exposed to an alternate discipline pattern, this exposure may then underly the differences in tolerance found between sexes and islands.

593 861 184 The tolerance of differences may only be a function of exposure time. The case here is that parents who are engaged in the work force spend less time with their children than do elder parents. Hence the working parent would not be as quick to react to disobedience on the part of children than would grandparents who are actively engaged in child

593 rearing for longer periods each day. Women on the more
861 distant islands are less likely to be engaged in work out-
184 side the home. They also showed the tendency to be less
tolerant than mothers on the near islands. This relation-
[177] ship adds supports to the rationale that exposure to main-
land social patterns, and the daily duration of interactions with children are key elements in the measured differences in the discipline habits of women both across generations and islands. It might also be added that the work habits of the women on the nearer islands both in terms of the nature of the labor and its consequence of a higher income base also contributes to the differences.

However this is not the total explanation. It is also
592 important to consider that the more isolated Gullah families
184 place more emphasis on the assignment to children of chores
857 which were central to the operation of the family unit.
861 These tasks rather than being assigned to provide the child
[867] with a sense of responsibility are assigned on the assump-
tion that the child already has competent work habits. Consider for the moment the child whose task is to draw water, to cut wood and handle the chicken coop. If the child neglects these chores there would indeed be serious consequences. For this neglect would noticeably disturb the operations of the household. Those households on the more distant islands being supplied only with wood burning

861 "undone" house chores while girls were. Upkeep of the
562 house was clearly the female role. When you also consider
[462] that females more frequently reported that they were disciplined
on an everytime ratio, role differences are again
indicated.

It must be clearly understood that the difference in
part may be attributable to the greater likelihood that the
social behavior of female children would be committed in or
close to the house, than would be the case for males. This
suggests that the female asocial acts could be more readily
noticed. In part, parents and elders in particular may
just be more lient with male children. Certainly the "man
chill" attitude is prevalent here. Since females outnumber
males, a premium is placed on male children. Among island
[178] parents, tolerant attitudes toward males may also be a
unique cultural reflection of an African habit.

184 In summation, there were few areas in which signifi-
86 cant differences exist across the islands. Islanders are
quite agreed in their discipline attitudes. Much of the
preceding discussion must be seen in the persceptive of
broader level homogenity across the five islands. The most
[178] noticeable implication is that the isolation of the Sea
Islands has to a large extent protected the cultural cohe-
siveness of the island community. Notions of the broad
[177] scale influence of the mainland elements on island

184 discipline habits is not the case. While the generational
86 factor was upheld, the dominant pattern was the absence of
[177) significant differences across islands and particularly
across sex lines.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

592 The Sea Island family is a cohesive unit. Many of the
178 tested generational relationships were significant. These
177 differences between generations were primarily attributed
to effect of changing economic patterns, and rates of exposure
to mainland patterns. The island work force are now
464 engaged primarily in 9-5 work patterns. The pattern takes
177 this force into job situations in metropolitan Charleston.
861 While the island men tend to work in clusters in the different
industries in the region, women are heavily engaged
in domestic service work. The projected results are that
women because of the nature of their employment were much
more exposed and consequently influenced by the tolerant
discipline habits of Whites and mainlanders. In contrast,
the clustering work habits of males, in which members of
families are employed by the same employer has operated to
negate the influence of the new work pattern on male parents.
861 The more demanding work requirements which accompanies
178 the maintenance of a farm habit was also discussed.
561 It was said that the farm habit upon which the elder islanders
593 base their discipline references was unknown to

562
86
(178)
The notion that this attitude may be a reflection of an African habit was briefly mentioned. Because females tend to commit asocial acts within the family gap, this was offered in explanation of sex differences in disciplining.

(578)
Fighting was considered outside the female role, but a common behavior of males.

(177)
The reason for fighting as a more frequent behavior of males on James Island was explained in terms of the greater exposure of near islanders to mainland patterns.

505 weekly to bring persons to the mainland. Most inhabitants
[491] over forty remember these Saturday ferry trips to Charleston
or to other islands to buy and sell their produce, arts
and crafts.

433 Historically, the islanders were self reliant. Rice,
indigo, and long staple cotton were resources that flourished
well on the fertile soil, and brought substantial prices
on the market. The ocean provided an abundant supply of
[226] crab, fish and shrimp, and the children learned the art of
casting and netting at a very early age. Because most of
823 the islanders were fishermen, the ocean provided a topic
521 of interest and often evoked many natural responses ranging
from earliest childhood encouters to near death feats.

132 Few Europeans inhabited the islands because of the heat
164 and the threat of malaria. According to Nichols (1976:20),

> an important factor in the low numbers of Europeans was their
> ●177 susceptibility to the malaria-bearing mosquito which thrived in
> the fresh-water swamplands. During the summer months and fall,
> 136 which consituted the malaria season, the landowners moved to
> homes on the ocean or further inland. West Africans, on the
> other hand, had a genetic tolerance for the malaria parasite.

175 During the period from 1730 to 1840, Blacks
161 outnumbered Whites by a substantial margin.
For example, in 1800 there were 2,150 Whites and 12,400
Blacks in Georgetown County. By 1840, the county contained
2,200 Whites and 18,000 Blacks (Jackson et al.
1974:33). Thus a geographical isolation, social and economic
197 independence, and marginal contact with speakers of
177 English outside the Creole community nurtured an environ-

197 ment for a creole language to survive.

177 Today, the language situation on the islands is
complex. The communities are changing under the influx
of commercialization, inter-island communication and improved educational facilities. No longer socially isolated,
[191] many inhabitants are becoming bilingual. They command both
productive and receptive ability in English beyond that of
178 speakers in earlier times. The nuclear family structure
592 of the islands is such that the grandparents or some elder
855 member is usually the established household spokesman,
887 and assumes responsibility for rearing the children. As
197 expected, there is evidence of creolization in the language
(177) of the younger generations. While many do not purport to
actually speak the 'old time talk', they can and do use it
in situations requiring them to be spontaneous (i.e. verbal
attacks).

1.0. Focus of this study

121
197 The sociolinguistic pressures now exerted on the Sea Island communities match the general conditions that DeCamp (1971:351) has described for post-creole speech communities (i.e. communities in which a creole is in the process of merging with the standard language). There is a correspondence between the dominant official language and the creole, and there is sufficient breakdown in the formerly

128 a speaker. The difference in that number and the figures
193 in the preverbal and postverbal columns would reveal the frequency with which the verb appears in the absence of a marker. Cases where the stem count does not exceed the cumulative categorical count are cases where one or more English or Creole forms appear in the absence of a stem verb.

Table 2.1 shows a significant number of verb stems used by all consultants. Plausible reasons for the use of verb stems in such great frequency are that they express both tense and aspect, occur with all pre-verbal markers, and occur independently in nominal constructions. For
193 example, the following constructions were obtained by asking the consultant to produce semantic equivalents of: *I shell peas daily, I am shelling them now, I shelled them yesterday, I have been shelling them all day, I have finished shelling them, I had finished shelling them a long time ago.*

ɒɪ ʃɛləm	'I shell them' (tenseless)	(1)
ɒɪ də ʃɛləm	'I am shelling them'	
ɒɪ bɪn ʃɛləm	'I shelled them'	
ɒɪ bɪnə ʃɛləm	'I have been shelling them'	
ɒɪ dɔn ʃɛləm	'I have shelled them'	
ɒɪ bɪndɔn ʃɛləm	'I had shelled them some time ago'	

193 The fact that Creole verb stems have not been replaced
177 by standard English inflections indicates that it is more natural to retain an invariant verb stem than to acquire a new rule for a different system of marking. Consequently,

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina

193 the uninflected stem is not a stigmatized form as evidenced
177 by its ubiquitous appearance in the pre-mesolectal table (2.3). It seems under little if any social pressure within the Wadmalaw community to further conform to the English system of marking. But the more a speaker acquires Standard English verbs, the greater is the decline of the Creole pre-verbs /bɪn/, /bɪnə/, /dɔŋ/ and /də/. They have neither semantic cognates, syntactic functions nor graphemic shapes with parallels in the superstrate, which are reasons some of the preverbs become rare or non-existent as a speaker moves toward English.

193 Some Creole markers undergo replacement processes while others are exchanged or deleted in light of more prestigious English markings. Still others like the unmarked verb stem manage to survive.

Those verb stems that do survive well into the mesolect are usually synonymous semantically with English verb stems. But the range of function in creole languages is greater than in English, as exemplified in the following example. (The preverb /di/ is the semantic equivalent of /də/ in Gullah.)

i di waka	'he is walking'
sɔm waka man	'a wanderer'
i di laf	'he is laughing'
sɔm laf man	'a joker'
i di krai	'he is crying'
sɔm krai man	'a complainer' (Todd 1973:4)

193 English does utilize verbs as nominal modifiers such as *cry baby, go car* and *dance man*. However the creole does not have the treasury of synonyms that its parent languages possess. While *cry baby* is generally used in English to [195] refer to one who cries easily or constantly, *cry man* is often the only reference that the creole language has for a complainer, one who whines and one who cries easily or constantly.

The unmarked verb has a high frequency of occurrence in Tables 2.2 and 2.3. But, its appearance alone or in conjunction with certain preverbs is restricted. Non-stative verb stems do occur with /də/, /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /dɔŋ/. However, /bɪn/ seems to occur most often with stative verbs indicating simple past. The preverb /də/ does not appear in this corpus with stative verbs to produce a construction such as */i də no/ *'he is knowing'; or */i də βan/ *'he is wanting'. The seeming selectivity of the preverbal markers helps to account for the fewer tokens of /də/ and /bɪn/ as compared with the higher count of unmarked verbs.

Table 2.4 shows stem verb useage for basilectal speakers exceeding that of pre-mesolectal ones by a factor of approximately two. An explanation for this pattern is
193 that the pre-mesolectal speakers show a rise in the use of
177 verbs ending in *-ing* and in the use of English 'be' verbs
while at the same time they show a considerable decline in

193 the use of the Creole continuative markers /bɪn/ and /də/.
● 177 This movement indicates fluctuation in the direction of
English.[3]

19 2.2. The *-ed* morpheme

The *-ed* morpheme does not occur as a past tense indicator in the corpus for this study. Simple past is marked by a verb immediately preceded by /bɪn/: /i bɪn liβ/
19 'He left.' Many English inflectional morphemes are ac-
177 quired grammatical devices that are non-existent[3] in the
basilect and extremely rare in the mesolect as exemplified by the data in this study.

The English marker *-ed* occurred only once in the data, and this one occurrence was considered a hyper-correction. Hyper-correction as defined by Pasold (1972:195) comes about when speakers are in the process of learning forms from a different linguistic system, and have not mastered all the constraints on their use. Consequently, they often extend usage to contexts which are never used by native speakers of the language or dialect from which the forms originated. The hyper-correction appearing in the data is /ɒː god oβə dɛ/ 'I went over there' (6). The speaker's knowledge of the English system of marking verbs may be incomplete. He may not have internalized *went* as the past tense marker of *go*, an irregular verb. As charac-

S 19 177 teristic behavior one would have expected a speaker to say /ɒɪ bɪn go/ indicating an action which occurred some time in the past. This speaker replaces the preverbal marker /bɪn/ with the post-verbal *-ed*, which suggests vertical movement toward English.

S 19 Other occurrences of *-ed* are in words in which *-ed* does not mark tense:

ɒɪ tɒɪd	'I am tired'	(1)
də nɛkɪd man	'The naked man'	(1)

Bickerton (1975:107) shows that some past participle forms occur with polysyllabic verbs or learned words like *populated, accommodated, admitted,* and others with unaffixed forms (i.e. *populate* and *accommodate*). These words are seldom used by basilectal speakers unless used as formal vocabulary items. He concludes that when used, they are acquired as formal independent lexical items with no question of any productive process being involved.

It is not surprising that past tense *-ed* is essentially nonexistent in the data for the basilect, or the A 121 193 mesolect. The form has been discussed in descriptions of inland Black dialect for some time now, and the question of a creole origin for Black dialect is still an issue. Did it, or did it not derive from a creole ancestor like Gullah?[illegible] Rickford (1974:94) charges the failure of creolists to solve the mystery of Black dialect's ancestry to 'the traditional tendency to view a "creole" as a fixed invariant system, maximally different from its lexically

A 193 194 (A) A few days ago, *they walk(ed)*.
(B) Every day now, *they walk*.

The results were inconclusive. The consultants gave the 'correct' answer fifty percent of the time, which means that the *-ed* was NOT pronounced as often as it WAS pronounced. A 193 Consequently, any variable deletion associated with *-ed* forms that the consultants had, failed to furnish meaningful signals for the consultants' system of tense marking. Dillard concluded that there are justifications for eliminating inflections from the grammar of Black English, at least in the sense of tense as it is used in standard English (Dillard 1972:52).

A S 193 Both Stewart and Rickford have drawn parallels with some mesolectal varieties of Gullah and Black dialect. These creolists believe that inland Black dialect is descended from Gullah and possibly other creoles. While it is possible for 'dialect mixture' rather than convergence to have occurred, Rickford (1974) argues this claim is easily refuted by evidence of forms found in mesolectal varieties of Gullah today:

Stressed *bin* as remote-phrase marker:
Gullah - *I bin had that.*
Black English - *I bin had that plant.* (Rickford 1974: 95)

If the creolists are right, the absence of *-ed* in the grammar of Gullah would account for the infrequent occurrence of the *-ed* past tense form in Black English. S [197] The fact that present-day Gullah speakers, basilectal and mesolectal, have not acquired the English grammatical past

A S 193 [177] tense marker adds more support to the hypothesis that the sporadic occurrence of *-ed* in Black dialect is a stage in language acquisition. The occurrence of the lone mesolectal speaker who said /ɒː god oβə dɛ/ 'I went over there' is not dissimilar from the constructions occurring in the speech of some Black dialect speakers who say *I knowed that already*. Furthermore, many of the same social and geographical factors which nurtured the growth and development of Gullah on the islands also nurtured Black dialect on the mainland. But historically the islands were closed communities with little in migration. The speech patterns were therefore much more stable than those of other inland Black people who had more interaction with English-speaking Europeans. Today, linguists continue

A S 193 197 177 to classify the people who speak Gullah as different from those who speak Black dialect. While it is possible to separate Gullah from Black dialect linguistically, it is no longer as easily done socially. With improved transportation to and from the islands, many Gullah speakers interact daily with inland Black speakers through economic and social activities. It is through this interaction that some language changes are occurring in Gullah. It is very likely that certain features associated with Gullah are being reinforced in inland Black dialect speakers through this same process.

193 mesolectal speakers. Turner (1949) observed /də/ in Gullah functioning primarily as a verb of incomplete predication. Cunningham (1970:66) provides a syntactic description of /də/ + VERB and /də/ + VERB + *ing* performing as the present continuative aspect markers. They appear with both transitive and intransitive verbs in which case /də/ always precedes and -*ing* always follows. The two aspect markers /də/ and -*ing* do not co-occur.

Table 2.2 shows /də/ exceedingly more frequent than all quantitative counts for the English verbs 'to be'. The category includes any form of the verb 'to be', but an important fact obscured by the tables is that the English cognate selected most often to replace a creole preverb is *was*. Other present tense forms such as *is*, *am*, and *are* make few, if any appearances. Those numbers which are starred indicate that at least one half, in some cases more, of the appearances of the 'be' verb chosen, occurred in conjunction with either the Creole preverbal markers /dɔŋ/, /də/, /bɪn/ or /bɪnə/ as a form of self-correction (i.e. /ɒɪ wɔz oβə dɛh - ɒɪ bɪn oβə dɛ βɪd dɛm/ 'I was over there - I bin over there with them' (6)), or the form appeared in a construction other than standard English or 'basilectal Creole' (i.e. /ɒɪ wɔz kɔm ɔut də hɔz/ 'I had come out of the house.') It appears
● (177) that *was* is acquired from English, not only to mark simple past for *be* verbs, but as past marker in general, as in: /die βɔz pɔnɪʃ ju di βie die fɪllɛk/ 'They punished you

193 in the manner they saw fit' (2). Considering that
177 the category is composed of English *be* verbs which were used in lieu of /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /də/ the number is quite low, especially when compared to the total number of occurrences of /də/, /bɪn/ and /bɪnə/ in Table 2.2. As expected, Table 2.3 shows a higher occurrence of *be* forms beyond the basilect than occurrences of /bɪn/, /bɪnə/ and /də/. Likewise, all the consultants in Table
(115) 2.3 showed some familiarity with English *be* verbs. As evidenced by their performance, five of the fourteen speakers in Table 2.2 show no familiarity with English *be* verbs at all.

193 The preverb /də/ performs a number of functions in addition to marking present continuative. The high frequency of /də/ in Table 2.2 is related to this as well as other functions:

/də/ as present continuative aspect marker:

/cɔ^{0}m ɹɛit ɡɔndə dɛdɪ də stæn əp/ (3)
'See it right there daddy. Standing up.'

/i də ʃek totə/ 'She is shaking potatoes.' (23)

/də məŋki də hol/ 'The monkey is holding on.' (5)

/də/ as past continuative aspect marker:

Cunningham notes that the past continuative is marked by /bɪn/ + ɛ + VERB and /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing:*

When you call me, I been ɛ cook my dinner.
'When you called me, I was cooking my dinner.'

I been driving one day 'I was driving one day'
(Cunningham 1970:67-8)

193 It precedes the verb or predicate adjective that it marks or it may perform alone as the main verb constituent. It can co-occur with the equating verb /ɪz/, or the locating verb /də/, but the forms do not generally occur together (Cunningham 1970:64). [177] Creole /bɪn/ may be borrowed from English, but it should not be confused with the English past participle *been*. Other than vowel lengthening as in English /bɪːn/, it is difficult to claim any phonological disparity between them, but semantic and syntactic differences between *been* and /bɪn/ are more clearly defined. English *been* has an invariant grammatical function, to perform primarily as a perfective and past participle of 'be' verbs. Other features associated with its use are (+ PERFECT), (± PASSIVE), (± STATIVE). In some cases it can act as the main verb in constructions such as *He has been here*. But *been* does not occur in standard English without the aid of an auxiliary verb.

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194 **Unstressed /bɪn/.** When unstressed /bɪn/ signals a completed action in Gullah, the data in this study show this use of /bɪn/ is replaced by *was*. Several constructions show them both occurring in combination:

/ɒɪ wɔz oβə dɛ^{h}(correction) ɒɪ bɪn oβə dɛ^{h}/ (6)
'I was over there with them.'

/ɒɪ wɔz bɪn ɹɔŋ dɛ^{h}/ 'I was around there.' (8)

/die wɔz pönɪʃ ju (correction) bɪn pönɪʃ ju di βie die fi·l lɛɪk/
'They punished you in the manner they saw fit.' (2)

193
177 The foregoing sentences show one operation of language

193 change as the Creole and the English replacement occur in
●177 conjunction. The self-correction may indicate that the Creole is the more natural choice. Seemingly insecure about which form to use, each of the three speakers corrected his speech in favor of the language that he knew best. The last sentence shows the English replacement *was* occurring in pre-verbal position with a stem verb, where the preverb /bɪn/ would normally occur. The past tense indicator *-ed* is omitted and tense is marked by *was* as it would have been marked with /bɪn/. The joint appearance of the English past tense form with a Creole form owes its existence to a convergence of Creole and English grammar which produced a sentence which is neither Creole nor English. Even more important, the examples offer linguists an opportunity to observe abstract conceptualization processes that a speaker undergoes to reconcile the conflict between competing rules involved in linguistic change.

19 Stressed /bɪn/. Neither Turner nor Cunningham acknowledge stressed /bɪn/ as a remote past marker in Gullah. Consultants 1, 2 and 3 produced examples of a stressed /bɪn/ which could not have been a variant form of the unstressed form because the sentences were uttered in a context which does not allow substitution by a simple past tense marker without alterning the meaning:

193 Of the twenty-one speakers consulted, 67% used /bɪnə/. As shown in Table 2.4, the form can be expected to occur five times more frequently among basilectal than among [177] pre-mesolectal speakers. The decline in usage by the pre-mesolectal speakers may be caused by /bɪn/ being replaced by more English-like progressive markers (e.g. *been going* as oppoed to /bɪn go/ or /bɪnə goin/. English replacements would account for /bɪn/ becoming rare as one moves beyond the basilect. Only two of the seven speakers considered to be pre-mesolectal in Table 2.3 use the form. These same speakers show a decline in frequency of useage of the Creole progressive aspect markers /bɪn/ + VERB and /bɪn/ + VERB + *ing*. The ratio of *-ing* useage among pre-mesolectal to basilectal speakers is about 2:1. [177] The higher frequency of the pre-mesolectal speakers may be attributed to their having acquired from English many *-ing* morphemes as whole words in the form of participials and nominals.

/də sta ə lɪl dʒɪdlɪn ɹiun/ (2)
'It started to drizzle rain a little.'

/də 'βɛrə də 'klo·zɪn ɪn/ (2)
'The weather was closing in.'

/də 'heβie də wəz gɪɾn/ (2)
'the heavier it was getting'

Participial and nominal *-ing* are 'special' items, acquired through grammatical rules. They are probably first added as simple vocabulary items which do not impose on the Creole verbal structuring. Through continual use

193 its absence can not be accounted for by any appeals to grammatical or phonological deletion processes because there is no evidence that Gullah speakers, mesolectal or basilectal, ever had any production rule for its use, nor do they have any now.

(2) An investigation of the *-ed* morpheme shows it to be absent also. There is a category of past tense in the grammar of Gullah, but it is clearly not marked with *-ed* as it is in English. Again, only one *-ed* occurred in the data, and that one was assigned to performance error. It is clear from the data that when tense is indicated, it is marked in Gullah most frequently with preverbal /bɪn/.

(3) Cunningham (1970) makes no attempt to 'weed out' those constructions which are exclusively Creole. She observes *is* as the equating verb or the verb joining two nominals, or a nominal with a *for* phrase functioning as a possessive. The data for this study show /də/ as the primary equating verb, though consultant number 3 shows a fairly consistent frequency of /ɪz/ joining two nominals (e.g./däs truɸ/ 'That is the truth'). However, there are (197) interferences from English in the *be* category. The main English *be* verb used in Gullah is /wɔz/. Other verbs like *is*, *am*, *are*, and *were*, rarely occur. Their positions are filled by /də/, marking present tense, and /bɪn/ and

193 /bɪnə/ marking past and progressive. This class of features is hard to analyze because the English verbs often occur along with the Creole preverbs.

(4) A quantitative decline is apparent in the absence of /də/ and /bɪnə/ as revealed by Table 2.3 (pre-mesolectal speakers). These variants are less resistant to change than /dəŋ/ and /bɪn/ which have phonological cognates in English but have quite different semantic and syntactic functions. The consultants in this sampling are not familiar with the English restrictions, as evidenced by their performance.

193 Finally, attention may be drawn to the fact that though all speakers selected used some Creole verbs:
•177 (1) there are no speakers in the sample whose total count of English *be* verbs exceed the count of Creole preverbs;
(2) some speakers used no English *be* verbs at all;
(3) no speaker in the sample could be classified, according to his features of speech, as a Black dialect speaker.

19 The conclusion made explicit by these generalizations is that all speakers in the sampling, basilectal and pre-mesolectal, are speakers of Creole in their choice of verbs. They differ only in the level of Creole spoken.

7: Jackson L-5 (1973-1976) 1989
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PRONOUNS	PERCENT USAGE OF FORMS								Total No. of Occurrence
Person Gender Case	BASILECT		PREMESOLECT		MESOLECT		ACROLECT		
	form	%	*form*	%	*form*	%	*form*	%	
3 ♀ N	ɪm	0	i	55.2	hi	16.4	ʃi	28.4	67
3 ♂ O	əm	71.5	i	4.5	ɪm	21.0	hɪm	3.0	61
3 ♀ O	əm	74.2	i	3.2	ʃi	12.9	həɹ	9.7	31
3 ♂ P	ɪm	13.8	i	62.1	iz	20.7	hɪz	3.4	29
3 ♀ P	ɪm	0	i	83.8	ʃi	16.2	həɹ	0	6.

TABLE 3.2. (THIRD PERSON) PRONOUNS WITH FOUR VARIANTS

Person Gender Case	BASILECT form	%	PREMESOLECT form	%	MESOLECT form	%	ACROLECT form	%	Total No. of Occurrence
3 ♂ N	ɪm	3.6			i	77.6	hi	18.8	165
3 ϕ N	ɪm	13.2			i	84.2	ɪt	2.6	38
3 ϕ O	əm	96.0			i	2.0	ɪt	2.0	51

TABLE 3.3. (THIRD PERSON) PRONOUNS WITH THREE VARIANTS

♀ = Feminine	N = Nominative
♂ = Masculine	O = Objective
ϕ = Neuter	P = Possessive

Two tables are required to show a systematic distribution of third person singular pronouns in Gullah. One table contains pronouns with four variants while a second table contains pronouns with three variants. On the surface, the system seems more elaborate and complicated than that of its English superstrate. But the variants represent levels of Creole speakers and possibly stages in the acquisition of standard English. For example, to produce
193 a semantic equivalent of *her* in the sentence *I know her*,
196 a speaker will select a pronoun from his repertoire of
177 rules governing third person objective forms. The one that

193 196 ([177]) is selected will depend on the speaker's knowledge of Gullah and standard English, as well as social factors such as audience, age and education. According to the data, there are four forms from which a speaker may select:

1) If the speaker is basilectal or wishes to appear as such, he will select /əm/ and produce /ɒː nuo əm/ 'I know her';

2) If the speaker has acquired a rule for the use of /ɨ/, then he will say /ɒː nuo i/ 'I know her';

3) If the speaker has a grammatical rule for the use of a form distinguishing male from female, then he will probably say /ɒː nuo ʃi/ 'I know her';

4) Finally, if a speaker has acquired the acrolectal feminine, he will say /ɒː nuo həɹ/ 'I know her'.

193 Few speakers use all four variants, offering some credibility to DeCamp's theory that each creole speaker masters a span of a language acquisition continuum, and that no speaker masters both extremes unless he masters the intermediate varieties as well (DeCamp 1971).

But data in this study support the hypothesis that it is possible for a child growing up in a Creole-speaking community to learn to use the pronouns /əm/ and /həɹ/ (both polar forms) to mark third person feminine objective case without having acquired a rule for the use of /hi/ to mark feminine object.

The third person singular pronouns in Gullah are discussed according to case and frequency of occurrence. It will be shown that the status of a form may vary

193 sample indicates that /əm/ is perhaps NOT related to /hɪm/
in the superstrate. First, there is a definite phonetic
pattern observed in the use of /əm/, /ɪm/, and /hɪm/.
The mid central vowel /ə/ + /m/ is the general marker used
for object position only. When reference is made to a
pronoun approximating English *him* the high front vowel
/ɪ/ is used, and it occurs only in subject position.
[194] Furthermore, /ɪm/ occurs as the unaspirated allomorph of
him in MASCULINE objective position only. Even then its
frequency of occurrence is only 21% as compared to 71.5%
occurrence of /əm/. Up to this point, the pattern that
seems to be emerging is that the Gullah speaker acquires a
form, generalizes and saturates each case with this form
before going on to another selection, so that each form
selected appears in each of the three cases. If /əm/ is
etymologically connected with /ɪm/, one would perceive
its existence in the feminine and neuter categories also.
[177] It does not make an appearance, which suggests that by the
time Gullah speakers acquire the English objective pro-
nouns in the evolutionary process, they have already made
the distinction between masculine, feminine and neuter
case markers.[11]

[194] The phonetic difference between /ɪm/ and /əm/ is
slight, and thus would make /əm/ easily replaceable by
/ɪm/, and ultimately replaced by the pre-aspirated
[114] allomorph /hɪm/. The evidence indicates that /əm/ is
still the only pronominal form marked for case, which is

193 rule because /hi/ is a form used to refer to both male
194 and female in Gullah.

197 The /h/ is not entirely lacking in Gullah. Turner offers a list of personal names and words with initial /h/ derived from source languages such as Vai, Mende, Twi, Fon, Wolof and others (Turner 1949:93-94). The appearance of /h/ at least in some consultants' speech indicates that it was phonemic historically in West African words but it is now deleted initially in the pronunciation of English words. The appearance or non-appearance
● (197) of /h/ in present-day Gullah may result from (1) a convergence and vocabulary borrowing from English, (2) a slow spread of /h/ from West African source languages to English words, or (3) the loss of initial /h/ with the subsequent loss of West African words and its reacquisition with English replacements.

193 There is no apparent change at all in neuter subject.
197 The pronoun *it* is yet to be acquired in the pronominal system of these consultants. However, change is activated in the third person feminine subjective case. Three of
(197) the speakers are acquiring the English palato-alveolar fricative [ʃ] to mark feminine gender, /ʃi/, while none of the speakers use /ɪm/, a more basilectal form, to mark this position. Though these three speakers use *she*, they use /i/ and /hi/ to mark feminine as well. Eight out of nine marked nominative third person feminine with /i/, while five out of nine marked feminine with /hi/.

8: Smith Q-4,5 (no date) 1926

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181 learned in woodcraft and the ways of animals and birds and fish, and in quaint similes and shrewd sayings use this knowledge to illustrate their dealings with their own kind, and their relations with the outside world.

177 In increasing measure, however, good roads, bridges, and free rural schools are bringing in outside influences and the processes of civilization. The numerous hunting clubs in winter and coast resorts in summer are likewise increasing their points of contact with the rest of the State. They are being slowly transformed and conformed, becom-

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181 present, the third looking toward the past: (1) William Pickens, himself a Negro, says: "Till this day the Negro is seldom frank to the white man in America. He says what he does not mean; he means what he does not say. . . . This is one reason for the great misconception in the white race respecting the desires, ambitions and sentiments of the black." *The New Negro, His Political and Civil Status and Related Essays*, p. 37.

(2) Mr. Gonzales says: "Of all the inscrutable peoples of the Eastern world, none is more secretive than the Negro, nor any so puzzling to the psychologist, for while it is easy to know that deceit lurks behind the mask of engaging frankness with which he seeks to disarm those who doubt him, the exact nature of the deceit can seldom be discerned." Review of Charles C. Jones, *Negro Myths from the Georgia Coast*.

(3) Dr. Stanhope Sams, literary editor of "The State", looks to the Negro's past: "There is a dark region beyond the mind and soul of the Negro of the slave plantations that may never be explored. No trained and well equipped psychologist, so far as I know, has ever attempted this magnificent research. Certainly none of the Negro students of the race has seemed to get even so near as white students have approached. So far as I have ever seen in their writings or heard in their speech, Dubois and Booker Washington did not enter that primeval jungle. And it is not possible now, perhaps, to 'restore' this primitive jungle race and lore. It would be a far more difficult task than the restoration of Kish or Ur, or to bring back to earth some semblance of the mysterious Sumerians. There we have at least a tablet or stele or monument to help; but we must decipher the Negro of the days of the Pharaohs and of Carthage and of the impenetrable backward and abysm of time that stretches like an uncharted sea behind the African Negro from the modern Negro in America or Africa.

"At all events, as it seems, the contact he must have had with cultured Egyptians and Carthaginians left no enduring record. It is possible—despite some vague beginnings of civilization in certain parts of Black Africa—that the only lasting betterment in conditions the Negro has yet known or held has been received during and since he became a slave in the Southern States.

"It remains an alluring, but a chimerical adventure—this attempt to learn what the Negro was before his contact with us.

"On their own part, the Negroes seem to have formed a conspiracy of silence. Possibly they suffered too profoundly, were hurt too bitterly, to tell us their own story. They preferred, doubtless, to leave it behind them in the engulfing and obliterating jungle. They must have known, must have remembered, those first slaves, and they have always had the genius for story-telling and singing. Yet they tell no stories that reveal their previous march, sing no songs—except with borrowed music, and fill their mythologies with the animals and beings of the world that bound and enslaved them."

177 ing less like their forbears and more like their contemporaries. Under this slow but sure leveling process their local characteristics and regional traits are gradually fading into uniformity with the common average of their kind and color.

SPIRITUALS

533 The Gullahs abundantly possess the characteristic Negro gifts of rhythm, quick emotionalism, and harmony. From these, music inevitably comes. They sing many kinds of songs,—work-songs, boat-songs, shout-songs, and spirituals, but the spirituals, or prayer-songs, outrank in number and interest all other varieties.

As might be expected from background and environment, the spirituals of the low-country Negroes are like those found elsewhere, except that they are more primitive in quality, more fluid and less standardized, ruder in text, more pathetic in tone, and more pláintive in music.

Each time a spiritual is sung it is a new thing. Rarely does one hear a spiritual sung twice in exactly the same way. It is not static or final, but dynamic and growing, for it is the creature of oral tradition and fully exemplifies every possibility of variation associated with oral tradition and communal transmission.

New spirituals are constantly being made, either by

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(152) For an early description of the frenzy of emotionalism reached by Negroes in singing a favorite spiritual like "Jesus said He wouldn't die no mo'," see Elizabeth Kilham, "Sketches in Color, IV," *Putnam's Magazine*, March, 1870, pp. 307 and 308.

(113) Two good boat-songs, as well as a spiritual, a gospel hymn, and a miscellaneous song (all with words and music), are to be found in Marcellus S. Whaley, *The Old Types Pass*, Christopher Publishing Co., Boston, 1925.

(113) At least it was in the past, before the Negro folk-tradition came in for the wide attention it is now receiving both in sociology, music, and published criticisms. See Margaret Widdemer's, "Gathering Treasures Among Negro Folk Songs," *The Literary Digest International Book Review*, June, 1926, pp. 425, 426, for a convenient and sane review of four recent publications: Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, Harvard University Press; Emmet Kennedy, *Mellows*, Boni and Liveright; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press; Howard W. Odum and Guy B. Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, University of North Carolina Press. Since her review, two other books have been added to the contemporary list: James Weldon Johnson, *The Second Book of Negro Spirituals*, The Viking Press, 1926; William Arms Fisher, *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, Oliver Ditson Co., 1926. Mr. Fisher's twelve-page introduction is particularly valuable for its scholarly exposition of the history of the spirituals in American music.

Compare the statement of Professors Odum and Johnson (*Negro Workaday Songs*, University of North Carolina Press, 1926, p. 188): "There seems to be an impression abroad to the effect that the making of Negro spirituals stopped long ago. On the contrary, it is quite probable that more spirituals are being made today than during the days of slavery."

(179) Mr. Fisher is undeservedly hard on recent examples: "In both texts and music the post-war Spirituals lack the elemental vigor, directness, naturalness and spontaneity of the earlier songs. The texts have become sophisticated and the music debased by that hybrid white American product—the gospel hymn." *Seventy Negro Spirituals*, VIII.

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533 178 814 belong in the plantation tradition. They have studied the spirituals long and carefully at first hand, have learned them orally from groups of Negro plantation singers, and sing them seriously, feelingly, and sympathetically. Students of Negro music who know the facts are unanimous in the opinion that their rendition is accurate, dignified, and artistic."

533 178 517 The second influence came from a movement to get the Negroes themselves to see the racial importance and native worth of the spirituals and hence to continue to sing them, instead of discarding them as something vaguely to be ashamed of, in favor of printed collections of the white race.

[871] This influence has been particularly effective on St. Helena Island, through the instrumentality of the Penn Normal, Industrial and Agricultural School, which has exerted an extensive influence on the large Negro population of that island." In regard to the spirituals, the most important result, next to the continued singing of the spirituals by the island Negroes, is the recent publication of the words and music of 113 of the finest low-country spirituals."

533 This is the work of N. G. J. Ballanta, himself a Negro from Sierra Leone. Possessing as he does both musical scholarship and a native African background, he is unusu-

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[177] "Following are two interesting opinions on the subject of the white people's singing of spirituals. The latter opinion is the more accurate: "Carl Van Vechten writing in *Vanity Fair* about these songs declared it as his opinion that white singers cannot sing them, and that women, with few exceptions, should not attempt to sing them at all. . . . . I agree that white singers are, naturally, prone to go to either of two extremes: to attempt to render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahm's song, or to assume a 'Negro unctuousness' that is obviously false, and painfully so. I think white singers, concert singers, *can* sing Spirituals—if they *feel* them." Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, pp. 28, 29.

Compare the remark of a Negro woman quoted by Miss McKim (*Slave Songs of the United States*, XXIII) concerning how a spiritual should be sung: "It can't be sung widout *a full heart and a troubled sperrit.*"

[162] "St. Helena has a population of approximately 6,000 Negroes and 60 white people. The Penn School, founded during the War Between the States, was the first school for Negroes in the South supported by Northern funds. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency by Miss Rossa B. Cooley, who went there in 1908. It dominates the island settlement and has had a tremendous influence upon it, so much so that the St. Helena Negroes are considerably above their racial average in most ways.

"*St. Helena Island Spirituals*, G. Schirmer, Inc., 1925.

533 ally well equipped to deal authoritatively with Negro spirituals."

It is interesting to note that he traces the musical form of the spirituals directly back to African sources. "It is true," he says, "that in a great many instances one may meet with spirituals which actually are arrangements of strains of Hymn tunes, and especially so is this the case with present-day religious productions of the Negro; but it is also true that although there are evidences of the effect of the environment of the American Negro, yet these evidences are overbalanced by others which go to prove the African origin of these Negro Spirituals. . . .

"No one who has been in Africa and has heard the music of the Africans would doubt the sincerity of the statement that the characteristics of the music of the American Negro could be traced to an African stem."

This seems an accurate statement of the case. It is much (562) nearer the facts than the oft-quoted opinion of Booker T. Washington, that the spirituals are products of slavery.

(114) They are products of slavery in the same sense though 533 not in the same degree that they are products of Christianity. That is, both Christianity and slavery had a share 562 in their make-up and undoubtedly were factors, but the 114 real basis and structure are African. The part slavery played was to add intensity and poignancy to the native 178 racial pathos and yearning, while Christianity furnished 177 a remarkably appropriate and vivid background of concrete imagery, concepts, characters, and ideas." But back

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Dr. Frank Damrosch wrote of him: "He is undoubtedly doing fine work in arousing an interest in African music. He is, so far as I know, the only one who is competent to do this work." *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Intro., IV.

Ibid., Foreword, VI. Compare James Weldon Johnson's somewhat parallel view, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 23-27, and H. E. Krehbiel, *Afro-American Folksongs*, G. Schirmer, 1914.

"They glow with the hope that the children of bondage will ultimately pass out of the wilderness of slavery into the land of freedom. In singing of a deliverance which they believed would surely come, with bodies swaying with the enthusiasm born of a common experience and of a common hope, they lost sight for a moment of the auction block, of the separation of mother and child, of sister and brother. . . ." S. Coleridge-Taylor, *Transcriptions of Negro Melodies*, Preface.

For an excellent expression on this point see Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, Preface, 20, 21. The whole preface is well worth reading. In it, however, and in the Preface to *The Second Book of American Spirituals* as well, there are occasional lapses from either fact or interpretation into stone-throwing. (527) This, for example, from the latter volume, pages 14, 15, in connection with the

533 567 114 178 177 of both Christianity and slavery lie first, the native racial characteristics which were the really creative factors in the spirituals; and second, the particular environment which alone of all possible localities has called them into being."[21] This combination created them; Christianity shaped and molded them; slavery lent fervor.

533 152 178 567 As to their sadness, long after the War and Emancipation even to the present day, the same yearning note has persisted in Negro music. As two scholarly authorities have well put it: "Slavery has passed, six decades of liberty for the slave people have signalized the better civilization, and there still remains among the Negroes the same emotional nature, the same sad, plaintive, beautiful, rhythmic, sorrow-feeling in their songs."[22] On internal evidence it is impossible to date the spirituals. Those of 1880-1900 sound like those of 1840-1860.

533 152 (522) Likewise in the prolific "Blues"[23] and the many songs of jail, chain-gang, prison, and lonesomeness,[23] which are distinctly modern in composition, there is the same sad appealing note, with much self-pity. There is also, be it said in passing, a good deal of humor, which is the complement, not the opposite, of pathos.

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(527) scarcity of spirituals based on the birth or infancy of Christ: "The reason may be due in part to the fact that the anniversary of the birth of Christ was not, in the South, in any sense a sacred or religious holiday. Up to within recent years, at least, it has been celebrated chiefly with gunpowder and whiskey. It has there been the most secular, even the most profane of all holidays. In slavery times it was the one day on which the slaves were given a sort of freedom. The liberty of coming and going was greatly enlarged. On many plantations whiskey was distributed. The day was one given over to a good time; to singing, dancing and visiting; to guzzling, gluttony and debauchery. It is possible that it was a conscious part of the scheme of slavery to make Christmas a day on which the slaves through sheer excess of sensuous pleasure would forget their bonds."

(113) [21] With the exception of a few statements here and there, like the following, the importance of environment has usually been overlooked: "If there is anything 'racial' about the spirituals and the blues, then there should be immediate ability to catch the intricate rhythm on the part of Negroes from Jamaica, Zanzibar, and Sierra Leone. Such is not the case, and we must conclude that they are the products of a certain American environment: The South. They are American folk-songs, built around Anglo-Saxon religious concepts." George E. Schuyler, "Correspondence," *The Nation*, July 14, 1926, p. 36.

[22] Odum and Johnson, *The Negro and His Songs*, p. 19.

(113) [23] See the chapters on "Blues" and "Songs of Jail, Chain Gang, and Policemen" in Odum and Johnson, *Negro Workaday Songs*, the chapter on "Blues" in Dorothy Scarborough, *On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs*, and W. C. Handy, *Blues, An Anthology*, A. and C. Boni, N. Y., 1926.

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114 Camden County, too, has many excellent singers, but proximity to Jackson-
115 ville, Florida—as is the case with the section south of Savannah to the Ogeechee
533 River—has not increased the popularity of the old-time music. Outstanding among
those who sing in the traditional manner are "Major" Harris, Will Harrell, the
Lukes, the Gibbses, and several other singing families that appear to have inherited
the gift. There are hundreds of others listed in the membership book of our Society.
Unfortunately it is impracticable to name them all, though their devotion is the only
safeguard against oblivion that this music possesses.

533 Formerly the allegiance of the singers to the slave songs was supported by re-
ligious fervor and by the authority of the praise-house and the church, but these
178 strongholds are now given over to Europeanized book versions and vapid sacred
177 hymns. Neither possesses the power to stir the blood, and in many churches—even
where a vested choir sits in smug self-possession beside the pulpit—the congregation
sings the traditional songs when collection time comes around: the deacons know
from experience that the old tunes are potent money-getters, while the book songs
are not. It is well to recognize, however, that in a materialistic world loyalty needs
something more solid to stand on than religious exaltation. For this reason the help
of the white friends who have given their moral and financial support to the preser-
vation of the slave music is beyond price. To them this book is gratefully dedicated.

175 fifty editions in less than a hundred years, gave way to the newer versions by Tate
533 and Brady and by Isaac Watts. Although I have been unable to find any points of resemblance between Negro songs and those contained in the older collection, I have found traces of the influence of Dr. Watts—but only in word combinations. A Watts hymn, sung to long metre, runs as follows:

> Broad is the road that leads to death and thousands walk together there
> But wisdom shows a narrow path with here and there a traveller.

Katie Brown on Sapelo sings the following version—but to a tune that bears no relation to any I have ever heard:

(539)
Narrow road is Heaven road
Believer I know
With here and there a traveller
Believer I know
The broad road is Hell road
Believer I know
Thousand walk together there
Believer I know.

[177] It is self-evident that the Negro borrowed a word here, another there, whenever it pleased him, and he probably did the same with a musical phrase. But as is said by those who heard his songs at their best, soon after the Civil War, the creation for the most part was his own. The surprising thing is that so much of the traditional music has survived.

533 It is just possible that the almost human will to live displayed by many of the old songs has something to do with it. Frequently persons, who have heard the singers the night before, telephone for the words of a song. The tune haunts them, but without the verses they cannot give it expression. They have my sympathy.
533 I, too, have suffered in the same fashion, and been obliged in self-defense to
123 learn the songs. When I complained to Julia, my cook, of their torment, she answered: "They do us that way too, until we learn them." Susyanna, in teaching me "A'n' Jinny Hoe-cake," looked at me knowingly, and said: "You'll be singin' this tomorrow." I was. Cha'lotte, from Ragged Island—one of the Bahama group—also told me they got in her mind "like a worm" and gave her no peace. As can be seen, these songs have no regard for color.

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533 leading a religious song; a fact which makes it advisable, in writing down the words, to use as few punctuation marks as possible. The effect of an inexhaustible supply of breath is achieved through the simple expedient of the "basers"—as members of the chorus are called—"spelling" the leader, who gets his breath at the end of a narrative line while the chorus sings the response or the next line. In the old days, here, as in Africa, the virtuoso did not exist, and the basers played as important a part in group singing as the one who sang the leading lines. Now, however, there is a tendency to disregard the customary technique, which demands that the basers remain silent until the last word or two of the leader's narrative line is sung. In authentic slave music no nuances are observed,[12] but the absence of any variation in tone is not conspicuous when alternation between leader and chorus produces changes in volume. When the whole group sings in unison, however, the effect is extremely dull and monotonous.

533 114 178 ●177 One of the few trustworthy writers on the subject of Negro spirituals, Jeannette Robinson Murphy, could also sing them. It is regrettable that her book *Southern Thoughts for Northern Thinkers* (1904) is out of print. In the section on "The Survival of African Music in America," she tells us: "During my childhood my observations were centered upon a few very old negroes, whose mothers and fathers came directly from Africa, and upon many others whose grandparents were African born, and I early came to the conclusion, based upon negro authority, that the greater part of their music, their methods, their scale, their type of thought, their dancing, their patting of feet, their clapping of hands, their grimaces and pantomime, and their gross superstitions came straight from Africa." Even at this late date, it is possible to find ex-slaves in remote spots on the coast of South Carolina and Georgia who can—if their confidence is won—substantiate practically every one of her conclusions. It cannot be done, however, by sitting peacefully in a library chair or spending a comfortable summer vacation on the campus of a Negro school. Writers from New England who have studied the songs of the Negro, mostly in libraries, are prone to emphasize the importance of book evidence. They do not appear to realize that their conclusions are valueless without work in the field among the children and grandchildren of native Africans—who are our only authorities.

As Carter Woodson truly says, the proof offered by the writers who claim a white origin for the Negro spirituals "would not pass the test of any research depart-

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[12] *A Negro quartet that sings in a staccato fashion, or renders the last verse of a song pianissimo shows clearly that it has taken its cue from the white man.*

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533 ment of a real university." Mrs. Murphy goes on to say that "Some of their later
114 songs, it is true, we must technically call 'modified African,' but how far the original
177 song elements have been altered (and usually not for the better) by contact with
178 American life is a question of fact, and can only be settled by a careful comparison of the songs as sung among the natives of Africa and the changed forms in which their modified ones are found today in the South. It must be determined in each case, and cannot be settled by any general theory or formula. . . . The stock is African, the ideas are African, the patting and dancing are all African, and those who study this weird music at short range have no difficulty in recalling the . . . conditions that gave it birth."

533 Mrs. Murphy stresses the fact that the traditional way of singing slave spirituals must be learned in childhood when the voice is flexible, and—if you are to become proficient—you must listen to the older Negroes, preferably ex-slaves. Every characteristic she mentions is duplicated in the singing of the Negroes of the Georgia coast. As in South Carolina, they break every law of musical phrasing and notation, yet there is nothing to be found on the printed page to show how this is done. For instance, a prominent note is embellished with a variety of small notes which used to be called "trimmin's," tones are sung not found in our scale, humming is employed that is not easily transcribed, emphasis is placed—according to our ideas—where it does not belong, and one note is not left until the singer has a firm hold on the next—a method which produces the undulating effect that characterizes the genuine spirituals. The appearance of never taking breath,[13] already described, is another characteristic that must be observed in singing songs of this type. Unfortunately, the trick of dropping from a high note to a low one on a prolonged one-syllable word is less common than in my youth, but the arbitrary division of a monosyllable, and the placing of emphasis on the second half, are as popular as they ever were.

In our music, the accents generally fall on the stressed syllables of the spoken word and on the regular beats of the music, but as Natalie Curtis-Burlin tells us in *Negro Folk Songs* "the accents fall most frequently on the short notes and on the naturally unstressed beats, producing what we call 'syncopation' of a very intricate and highly-developed order. The peculiarity of this syncopation is best explained to the layman by drawing attention to the way in which the natural rhythms of the

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[13] *As Mrs. Murphy says, the breath should be carried over "from line to line and verse to verse, even at the risk of bursting a blood vessel."*

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000 the entire human race and the nations thereof, but a burning up of the rubbish of an ideology based upon the conception of racial ascendency. That dark and medieval doctrine is not as new as it may seem, or as old as to have faded from the subconscious of the most advanced peoples today. In a large degree, at least, it is going to go. It is going by the board, as these lines are written, in February of 1942, after Pearl Harbor, and after the fall, so perilously near extinction of white supremacy in the Far East, of Singapore. Other peoples than the English-speaking nations, with that hitherto immovable conviction of superiority—which they shared with western Europe—are going to take a hand, and a powerful one, following the debacle of totalitarianism, in the liberated expressions of peoples. That is going to affect art, greatly to its advantage. The deep, but narrow, chauvinistic, and exhausted cultures of a few small nations have come to the end, at least temporarily, of their creative resources. New blood, new spirit is needed, and history is seeing to it that, under the most tragic circumstances, it is being supplied. These processes will also apply to America, and to the very essential broadening of our perspectives, and our half-conscious, extremely costly emergence from slavery of many kinds—and perhaps to confinements of mind, which have made so difficult and so rare American creative achievement in music. Let emancipation, of a real and not an affected or sentimental kind—but a real emancipation of ideas and of culture—begin at home.

533 It is, however, not to be assumed from the foregoing, any more than from Mrs. Parrish's pages, that in acknowledging the unique and unparalleled contribution of
177 the Negro, we can overlook or minimize the white influences which have contributed to the quality of his song. Clearly and incontrovertibly, the "spiritual"—as other types of Afro-American folk music—is of Negro origin. No white composer or hymnal has produced anything like it. At the same time, such a music would never have come into existence if the Negro had not been brought here in bondage, with all the concomitant emotional, religious, and artistic consequences of that tragic ex-
533 perience. Here is a fusion of spiritual and musical forces not to be duplicated in the music of any other land—and this though all folk music, as it evolves through the centuries, is to be found to consist of the interweaving of various racial and melodic elements. But in no other folk music than America's is there to be discovered such a collision of dissimilar forces as in this American blend. Nor has there materialized such a product in any other country where whites and blacks assembled. Special types of folk song predominate in the most isolated communities, just as the folk songs of the British Isles have existed, uncontaminated, and for centuries, in isolated

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533 mountain districts of America. In other lands a long evolutionary process of centuries shaped melodic idioms that sprang from the soil. In America a special thing happened, which neither scientist, anthropologist, nor music critic has ever explained. The phenomenon is not to be dismissed as either accidental or unimportant, but to be studied in all its bearings upon our progress.

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126 This is a direction in which the author of the following pages is working with a modesty and unassuming conviction and purpose which need no praise. She is materially aided in her research by Mr. Churchill's transcribing of the songs. He has worked with a fidelity to the originals only conditioned by the limitations of our standardized scale and the inexactitude of our notation. The songs cannot be put down, exactly as they are sung, on paper. But these are the songs, as near as may be. They offer highly illuminative exposition of the various balances and amalgamations of racial elements of both African and American origin. Some of them are more
(177) than a little barbaric. In others the white influence is clear, if not predominant. In sum, these notations represent a fragment of a song literature that is unique among the expressions of mankind.

000 The rest is for the reader. The quality of this book, not that of a partisan, or reformer, or ex *cathedra* musicologist, is that of a seeker of the truth through the human contacts which lie at the basis of living art.

Olin Downes

New York City
February 16, 1942

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CHAPTER ONE

Concerning Slave Songs and Their Preservation

533 Where did they come from? Who composed them? How old are they? These are the questions repeatedly asked by Northern guests on hearing the little-known slave songs. But I have searched libraries, North and South, without finding the answers. The reason is simple: no one knows enough about the African side of the songs to write authoritatively concerning it, and their beginnings in this country are so obscure that one man's guess is as good as another's. This lack of knowledge, however, does not prevent guesses—both good and bad—from being made.

The birthplace of the songs is conceded to be the Old South, and they are
533 found nowhere else except where introduced—as in the Bahamas—by the slaves of
177 loyalists from the mainland;[1] but the honor of their creation, as indicated in the
178 first half of their name, Afro-American, goes definitely to the Negro, for they represent the genius of the early slaves who combined the complicated rhythms of Africa with the more highly developed melodies of the Colonial planters.

To be sure, native Africans studying music in this country question the justice of the share of credit allotted them by the hyphen, for they consider the songs to be preponderantly Negro. Nordics are no better satisfied. They as firmly believe that the slave composers were nothing more than plagiarists—and in the way of phrase-lifting, they were. These alien people were under the necessity of learning a foreign language in a few months, but it is a recognized fact that no white man can turn a phrase with the same pithy economy as the Negro, and none has ever composed—to my knowledge—a successful imitation of a Negro song. What neither claimant appears to recognize is this: without the remarkable musical gift and deeply religious nature of the African slave, there would have been no soul-stirring sacred songs. On
533 the other hand, without the contact with Western music and the inspiration pro-
177 vided by the Bible—at the hands of the slave-owners—these selfsame songs might

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[175] [1] *In all likelihood they were also carried to Liberia in 1820 by the transplanted American slaves.*

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533 • 177 never have come into existence. Like those that accompany the primitive African dance called the "ring-shout," they might have continued to be primarily concerned with rhythm, which represents Africa's idea of music, just as melody represents ours. Rhythm, in fact, may well be called the heart-beat of true Negro music, for it is based upon the natural beat of the pulse and its even division of tempo.

533 The question as to the identity of the composers of these songs lends itself to a more definite answer, from the accepted fact that folksongs everywhere represent the voice of a people rather than the creation of any one person. Those of the Negro are no exception.

Many Negro preachers and evangelists claim the composition of certain modernized "ballets" [2] and spirituals, but, on investigation, their assertions prove to be based upon the composition of new verses rather than new tunes—all of which fits the idea that folk melodies are traditional, and are looked upon as common property. The African technique may also account for the inability of the white man to sing like the Negro. The latter clearly possesses an intuitive knowledge of the song-form of Africa which enables him to weave polyphonic effects into familiar songs, and to follow acceptably a leader in those he has never heard before. In the old days his gift was such that he could sing extemporaneously—like a bird—on any and every occasion. Without a system of notation, however, we have no means of knowing how much credit was due the creative ability of the individual singer, and how much belonged to communal tradition. The word of white musicians who have recognized in Africa the ancestors of such songs as "I Ain' Got No Fr'en' in This Worl' but the Lord" and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" also obliges us to be skeptical of claims of any kind—oral or printed, individual or sectional—as to their composition.

A few years ago a Northern Negro composer made the assertion that "new spirituals are born every day." The news was widely publicized, but he was unfortunate in his choice of an example: the words he gave in illustration belonged to a song that was popular on the coast of Georgia long before he was born. Recently I saw in print that "Ride on, Conquering King" was first sung on St. Helena Island, South Carolina. Perhaps it was, yet the fact would be difficult to prove for the song is known throughout the southeastern states and in the Bahamas. Until we are more familiar with the distribution of these songs, and until we know more about the great store of folk music said to exist in Africa, it behooves us to be wary of making positive statements, unless we deliberately choose this method of getting at the truth

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[2] Ballads. *In the seventeenth century, the two words were often confused.*

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000 tural movement and its works of art which have had such profound influence upon the art of the West in the last thirty years; which produced the talking drums, and developed rhythm to a point "two centuries ahead of Europe."[8] It is also significant that the art critics who write concerning the primitive sculpture of Africa call attention to the manner in which the best examples conform to canons that are universal and, according to Louis Carré, apply with equal force to European classic art. It is 533 clearly no matter of accident that the Negroes who composed the Afro-American slave songs came from the very section of Africa which has yielded the finest specimens of sculptural art. Nor can it be considered a coincidence that musicians trained in the tradition of the "three B's" should marvel at the extraordinary feeling for rhythm and musical form shown in the slave compositions—"built on a foundation as solid as that of Bach," as one of them remarked after hearing the Negro singers of St. Simon's.

There seems to be no answer to the question of where the race got its intuitive knowledge of music (which musicians admit is acquired by white students only after years of study) unless we accept the theory advanced by Gobineau, the celebrated French Orientalist, that "the source from which the arts have sprung is concealed in the blood of the blacks"—with the concomitant conclusion that Ham must have been the musically gifted member of Noah's family.

So much for an historical outline of a form of music that is said by Franklin Harris, the composer, to be as distinctive and individual as any in the world.[9] But what of its status today and its chance of survival?

Thirty years ago, when I first visited the coast of Georgia, I would have said it hadn't a ghost of a chance. But now, after seeing what persistence, plus a little money has accomplished, I am not so sure—although I am still certain that those with any interest whatsoever in this music must do more than they have in the past to keep it alive.

● 177 533 (101) 123 126 533 When I arrived on St. Simon's in 1912, the stillness of the Negroes was puzzling until questioning brought out the fact that the island was a summer resort, and contact with city whites and their black servants had had its numbing influence; that the old-time singing had gone out of style, and spirituals weren't sung any more. After three musically barren winters I discovered, however, that a few Negroes

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[8] *In the words of W. E. Ward. For the complete quotation, see page 19.*

[9] *Call it "hybrid" if you will—but a name cannot alter its right to recognition.*

173 remembered their old songs and could be induced to sing for me if I would make it
126 worth their while. This was in 1915, and, ever since, I have been doing just that:
533 making it worth their while. During the bleak winters of the depression, some of the
singers literally sang for their supper—which, they thankfully observed, the Lord had
provided. In 1929 it was found expedient to put a cabin at my "Corner," and ever
since overflow audiences from the resort hotel at Sea Island have worn a path to its
door.

868 All of which goes to prove that this exotic music need not be given up for lost
so long as a few singers live to teach the traditional technique (Illustration 13,[A] to the
533 younger generation—on whom its survival depends. Long ago the need of training
the children seemed to me particularly urgent, and six groups in two counties were
taught by older singers, until hard times put an end to the undertaking. In the last
few years the value of such instruction has been proved in the help the young people
have given their groups at the "sings" on St. Simon's. (Illustration 25.[B] Where death
has thinned the ranks of the older singers, the younger ones have filled the gaps with
distinction.

But genuine Negro music is confronted by a real menace in the scornful atti-
533 tude of those Negro school-teachers[10] who do their utmost to discredit and uproot
177 every trace of it. Instead of being inordinately proud of their race's contribution to
178 the music of the world, as they have every right to be, too many of them treat it like
a family skeleton. In the schoolroom, even in sections where spirituals may be said
to be indigenous, they are suppressed, and the supposedly "more artistic" European-
ized book versions are laboriously learned. This misplaced zeal even follows the
pupils into the school yard. Such musically commonplace English game songs as
"The Farmer Takes a Wife"—although I admit the action is picturesque—are sub-
stituted for such joyous Afro-American melodies as "Go roun' the Border, Susie"
—for all the world like carrying synthetic coals to Newcastle! It must be remem-
bered, however, that the teachers cannot be blamed for the harm they do the musi-
cal taste of their pupils: they only reflect the type of training imposed upon the race
177 since 1861. No one quarrels with any system of education that helps the Negro to
hold his own in a white man's country; but when a system is employed which causes
178 him to despise everything African, and to throw away his birthright at a time when

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[10] *At Hampton Institute, when I protested at the way the old tunes were altered, a music instructor loftily informed me: "When they are wrong, of course they must be changed."*

A. [For Illustration 13, see Category 114, plate facing p. 81--Analyst]

B. [For Illustration 25, see Category 533, plate facing p. 145--Analyst]

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177 178 many authorities encourage him to believe in its value, it is evident that such a system stands in need of drastic revision.

In an address delivered in Philadelphia some years ago, Carter Woodson, the Negro historian, frankly said that the average American Negro is the victim of traditional teaching in Northern white schools; that his people are becoming a race of imitators; that not until they study their African background, react to it, and interpret it, can they hope to come into their own. A lifetime of contact with ex-slaves and their descendants, and of observation of the deleterious effects of the present-day system of education upon the younger Negroes, has convinced me that Woodson's arraignment is entirely merited. America has splendid material—and see what we do with it! Slavery of the body is bad, but I am positive that mental slavery does more harm to the race than physical bondage ever did.[11]

If ignorance of the history, dialects, art, music and literature of Africa—due probably to the ignorance of the educators themselves—can be remedied, and these educators can be made to appreciate the value of African art and music, then undoubtedly the race can once more contribute its quota to the art of the world. But such a right-about-face cannot take place until the Negro gets rid of the idea that all culture is vested in the white man's viewpoint. From the fact that Broadway features Negro actors, dancers, and musicians as never before, and that the producers of a Negro opera attempted to teach the Harlem blacks to speak and sing like their primitive Southern cousins, it is clear that this is no time for the race to be disdainful of its African heritage. In 1934, the most exacting New York critics applauded *Kykunkor*, the West African dance-drama, and made it the talk of the town—although some of us deplored its Europeanized singing. At about the same time, exhibitions of primitive African art were accorded such recognition as to fill the classicists with definite alarm.

Such is the precarious position in which the slave music finds itself today. While it is not hopeless, it is none too encouraging. Jaunts up and down the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, to the out islands of the Bahamas, and to Haiti, in search of African art survivals of all kinds give proof that they still exist, but the white man's drive against illiteracy is enabling the Negro school-teachers to make a drive, at the same time, against all things African.

000 According to Reuben Tolakele Caluza, the same situation exists in Africa,

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[11] *J. A. Tillinghast says, in* The Negro in Africa and America, *that American slavery, in effect, was a vast school, in which all the pecuniary profits went to the teachers.*

000 where records of London music-hall ditties are preferred to the folksongs of the native. It is a discouraging sign of the times to find quantities of sentimentalized spirituals listed in foreign record catalogues side by side with songs of African natives. It does seem as though we have come to a pretty pass when the Negro, who sings a spiritual as only a Negro can, is determined to sing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," and the white man, who sings a Brahms song to perfection, is equally determined to sing "Roll, Jordun, Roll." What a contrary world we live in!

533 177 178 But a clue to the solution of the problem is found in the fact that the rural Negro has always taken his cue from the white folks at the "Big House." If they favor and enjoy the slave songs, it may be that he is not so far wrong after all, in cherishing his heritage in the face of jeers from the "style" leaders of his community. Such being the case, the future of the old-time music evidently rests in the hands of the landed gentry of the South. Their influence is quite as potent as it was in the days "befo' de wa'," and in view of this fact and the known conservatism of the majority of the middle-aged rural Negroes, the prestige that plantation owners can give means the difference between extinction and conservation.

In consequence, I never lose an opportunity to beg the coöperation of those who are in a position to lend an encouraging hand. There is no need to do more than allow the Negroes to provide entertainment in the manner that was usual on many ante-bellum estates. The justification for such a positive statement is found in the efficacy of this very method on the coast of Georgia. No one has better reason than I to know what the interest of certain plantation owners has meant in the preservation of Negro music. For years the "Big Boss" of Sapelo Island [12] did much to increase its prestige. At Hofwyl Plantation, the devotion of the owners to the religious slave songs has made their neighborhood a veritable oasis of Afro-American music; and at The Ridge, "Miss Sis'," [13] as she was affectionately called, did splendid work in encouraging the survival of the ring-shout—although she characteristically disclaimed any credit. In addition, the applause of Northern audiences at Sea Island and at the Cabin has produced a striking change in the attitude of our Negroes toward their music.

535 If you are interested in African survivals and have a Negro community on or near your property, all you need do (provided you live in a remote district and are generous with your silver) is to let it be known that you wish to see such solo

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[12] *The late Howard E. Coffin.*

[13] *Mrs. W. E. Clifton*

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535 dances as "The Buzzard Lope," "Juba," "The Mobile Buck," and "The Mosquito
Dance" (accompanied by an occasional exclamation of "Slap 'em! Slap 'em!") –
and they may be forthcoming. Another interesting dance, done to the tune of "New
(243) Rice an' Okra," is used to scuff off the outside husks of the rice and to prepare it for
(412) beating in a hand-hewn mortar exactly like that used on the West Coast of Africa
(171) (Illustrations 7 and 8).[A] The pestles are heavy, and, to be wielded effectively, require
the aid of rhythmic songs.

There are also the ring-play dances, which appear to be a combination of African
535 play songs and the old English play-party or ring games. In most of them, the
533 action reflects white influence; but to have a variation of the Virginia Reel done to
● (177) an ominous African tune, with the threatening words, "Lawyer's suit!" repeated
after and overlapping each narrative phrase, indicates such a fifty-fifty division as is
often found in the religious songs.

One ring-play song uses "Sangaree" for its refrain, and in so doing gives a clue
533 to its age. Few people today know that ante-bellum planters were refreshed by this
West Indian drink which consisted of a chilled mixture of wine, sugar, nutmeg, and
water.[14]

In the coastal section of South Carolina and Georgia, the ring-shout, a semi-
535 religious survival of African dancing–not a vocal performance as the name implies–
533 is accompanied by a melodious chant which generally concerns itself with the simplest
539 of Biblical narratives and admonitions, as in

O Eve, where is Adam? O Eve–
Adam in the Garden pickin' up leaves.

533 In "Knee-bone I Call You, Knee-bone Bend," tones are used that baffle any
transcription; and the leader frequently drops a whole octave in singing the rhythmically
prolonged You, to the wonderment of white musicians unused to the trick
so often employed by the old-time Negroes. In this musical chant warning is given
that on Monday morning, and all other days of the week, the Lord calls upon you
to get down on your knees and pray. On one of the old Heyward plantations bordering
535 on the Combahee River there occurs a dance (clearly an African survival)
171 which, from its description, seems similar to one I saw performed by primitive
Negroes in the north of Haiti. There is another exotic performance on St. Simon's

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[14] *"Julep sangaree" was in use before 1840. Dr. L. D. Turner believes, however, that the song got its refrain from the African word sangari, meaning a ring dance.*

A, [For Illustration 7 & 8, see Categories 171 & 252, plates facing pp. 48 & 49--Analyst]

000 In a series of articles on Gold-Coast music in the *London Musical Times* (1932), Mr. Ward says:

> Africans are at least as musical as any race in Europe, possibly more musical than any. . . . Their harmony is as far developed as European harmony in the sixteenth century; it sounds very different, but it is not inferior. And in rhythm Africa is two centuries ahead of Europe. Their music is the most alive of any of their arts, and shows no sign of dying; new songs are constantly appearing, and quickly spread over the country. Whether it will survive the attack of bad Western music and the sapping of tribal institutions and religion, with which it is intimately connected, remains to be seen; ultimately music is threatened by the same dangers as other African arts, though it seems likely to resist more strongly. But if it could learn from Europe modern developments in form and harmony, African music should grow into an art as magnificent as any that the world has yet seen.

533 The relationship of our slave music to that of the African Negro is such that
171 what is said of one applies in the main to the other. This fact gives particular weight
to the authoritative words of Mr. Ward.

It seems to me that the ultimate fate of this music rests with the owners of
533 Southern plantations and with those who mold public taste through radio pro-
177 grams. Within the last year, there are indications that up-to-date young Negroes
178 are beginning to appreciate the authentic slave songs; and the increasing popularity
of exotic African tones and rhythms among white people leads me to believe that the pendulum of taste is swinging toward the music of Africa and away from the European preponderance of melody and harmony. In this trend lies a ray of hope for the survival of the contribution made by the Afro-American slave.

181 and that it was safer to let them lie. If you talked about them you might be stirring 827 up trouble for yourself. In Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird* the grandparents came to life when memory recalled them; it may be that the West Africans entertain something of the same belief.

Only by fitting together apparently unrelated parts have I been able to ad- 181 vance a reasonable explanation for our ignorance of the Negro's history and of his 567 private life. He has been in America nearly as long as the white man, yet how much do we know about him? Precious little. We learn of his migrations by inference. Where the pioneering white man went—first South, then West—there went the Negro slave to break the ground.[3] He is mentioned—that is all. From accounts given by travelers in Africa, it is evident that they find out no more about the home life of the native than the interpreters choose to have them know, and in America this same reserve is as persistent a characteristic as is the color of the race or its frizzy hair. Southern planters grow up with certain trusted Negroes, without dreaming that they may be skilled in some particular direction. It was interesting to watch [535] the face of one of them, Uncle Scotia, when he saw the Buzzard Lope—for the first time in his life—done by a Negro woman he had known for more than fifty years. If he had heard about the dance and inquired—as I did—"Can you do it?" she would undoubtedly long before have obliged him. I must reiterate that the importance of knowing what questions to ask cannot be overestimated.

How much of the hands-off policy of the early plantation owners was due to their own lack of initiative, and how much to the silent pressure which the black race knows so well how to employ, had best be left an open question. Southerners say that a college education is of no avail when pitted against the cleverness of the Negro; and I know of too many instances in which the colored man has outwitted the white, to doubt that assertion.[4] But whoever originated segregation [5] and the 181 regime described in 1829 by Captain Basil Hall in his *Travels in the United States,* ●177 the Negroes' passion for secrecy was fostered. Captain Hall quotes the owner of 567 a rice plantation on the Combahee River as saying: "We don't care what they do when their tasks are over—we lose sight of them till next day. Their morals and

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[3] *In considering the distribution of the slave songs this historical fact must be kept in mind. The Negro carried his songs with him, and I am convinced that they did not return against the tide of migration to any great extent.*

[538] [4] *Just as in the Uncle Remus tales, Brer Rabbit always outwits Brer Fox.*

[5] *Mary H. Kingsley, in* West African Studies, *tells us that among the Bantus the slaves live in villages apart from their masters.*

181 their manners are in their own keeping. The men may have, for instance, as many
● 177 wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters." And, I
567 notice, Southerners on our coast still tacitly observe this tradition.

When I began the work of actively retrieving slave songs, and instituted "sings"
123 at the Cabin in front of my cottage, I found it expedient to follow the same pro-
533 cedure. The group—silently, be it remembered—made it clear that such matters as
181 jail sentences and surplus wives were their affair, whereas my concern was limited to their music, although anything—such as drinking, "soldiering," or insubordination—which interfered with its proper presentation was distinctly within my province.

As a concrete example of the lengths to which the Negro carries his reluctance to give information, I can do no better than tell how Julia taught me a valuable lesson: never take anything for granted. After being my laundress for three winters, she became my cook in 1915, and for the fifteen years in all she enjoyed a precious secret. With her as intermediary I was able to hear the slave songs. She never sang a note on my place, and I assumed that she could not. But in 1927, at Mrs. Arnold's funeral, her dramatic moment arrived. With the group she had brought to my door, she stood beside the open grave, and she sang as well as the others. When I periodically ask why, in all those years, she never told me she could sing, she smiles quizzically, but says nothing. Perhaps she does not know herself.

181 However, it is just possible that an age-old compensation complex explains the
177 situation. I am convinced that the average Negro enjoys intensely knowing something that the white man does not, and the exquisite delight he derives from realizing that the white man has been bested in a little game makes up for any loss or
(123) indignity he may be obliged to endure. Julia's game was innocent and her loss was financial, but that such tactics may have a less pleasant side—aimed at the eventual discomfiture of an exacting employer—it may be well to remember.

181 Before leaving the subject of the Negro's secretiveness, it may be well to con-
177 sider this racial characteristic in relation to another that is quite as often mentioned by travelers in Africa: dread of derision.[*] It seems to me that the attitude of the
152 whites toward the blacks has never been calculated to encourage the latter to parade
186 their Africanisms. The slave trader's need of justification, and our ignorance of Africa and its culture, enabled him to persuade us that Africans were barbarians in

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[*] *Fear of ridicule enables African blackmailers with a gift of clever improvisation to collect tribute from their thin-skinned brothers—for the songs they do not sing.*

181 177 152 186 need of our "civilizing" influence.[7] The success of his propaganda is reflected in the words of Fanny Kemble, who wrote in her *Journal* that "all tongues—the most vulgar, as well as the self-styled most refined—have learned to turn the very name of their race into an insult and a reproach." Evidence of its pernicious effect on the Negroes themselves is also given by Sir Charles Lyell in his *Second Visit to the United States* (1845–1846). He asserts: "It is a good sign of the progress made in civilization by the native-born colored race that they speak of the Africanians with much of the contempt with which Europeans talk of Negroes." To the truth of these statements I can testify. I was cautioned as a child never to use the term African in the presence of our colored people for fear of hurting their feelings. Need we be surprised that the Negro denied all knowledge of Africa—even as Peter denied all knowledge of Christ!

181 Colored people are not the simple-minded, insensitive individuals (Illustration 9)A that certain Southerners lead us to imagine when they jauntily say: "Negroes are like children and must be treated accordingly." As in every race, there are immature minds, but in my experience they size us up far better than we do them. N I am inclined to agree with an observant Georgian who told me: "They know us better than we know ourselves." In consequence it seems to me advisable to make no definite assertions about the race, yet we do need every hint which will enable us to avoid such pitfalls as trap those unsuspecting souls who believe what they are told. Since Fanny Kemble's time we have seen in print all too many instances of the way the psychic Negroes obligingly tell unsuspecting listeners exactly what they wish to hear. Also, like their African cousins, our colored people are born actors; and an outsider with a pet theory about them can find ready confirmation of almost any notion.[8] The inquisitive college professor is particularly vulnerable, and when he becomes authoritative he is giving the Negro the opportunity he relishes above all things to laugh up his sleeve at the white man's gullibility.

Not all Negroes are like this. Some are loyalty itself; others hold themselves

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[7] *As late as 1902, Joseph A. Tillinghast, in* The Negro in Africa and America, *speaks of the "benighted savagery" of the African Negro and stresses the vast superiority of European culture. In the light of what is happening in Europe today, it seems to me wiser to say little about the blackness of the pot.*

[8] *From Fanny Kemble's account of her contact with her husband's slaves, it is ironically evident that they were the better actors. Their performance was so perfect that it carried conviction, and added to the difficulties encountered by Pierce Butler in his attempt to make a living out of his plantation.*

A. [For Illustration 9, see Category 142, plate facing p. 64--Analyst]

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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175 voyage from which they never returned.[23] Ten years ago Katie told me that the
567 Sapelo Negroes never swept dirt out the door at night if they could help it. If they
(822) did or were obliged to throw out water, it was important to say, "Move on, fr'en,"
(356) or " 'Scuse me, brother." Otherwise they were in danger of offending some of their
(775) kinfolk who might be passing by or "visitin' aroun'." On St. Simon's I was told if it
(782) were necessary to sweep at night you must first throw out a live coal, to make sure
you did not sweep away the spirit of some member of the family.

754 On Sapelo if a hag torments you at night you put a knife, or a Bible, under
789 your pillow. Glasgow says that a man he knows would cry out in his sleep and could
get no peace until he tried this remedy.[24] Katie told me that when you had occasion
775 to speak of the dead, you made the sign of the cross on your forehead. At a funeral
788 on St. Simon's an old woman went to the fireplace and, with a sooty finger, made
789 the same sign on the forehead of a little child. The next day, when asked why she
did this, she explained that it was to keep the spirit of the dead man from troubling
the youngster.[25] Katie also told me that passing the child over the coffin to someone
on the other side afforded the same immunity.

I have never been convinced that the reason given by our Negroes for holding
175 funerals at night was unimpeachably true. The answer I usually get, when I question
567 them, reflects on the generosity of the slave owner. It seems unlikely that any master
764 as kindhearted as the one described by Susan Dabney Smedes, in *A Southern
Planter*, would begrudge the time it took from the daily "tas' " for the funeral of a
beloved slave. Night funerals were apparently an established custom in Virginia in
1835, the time the Dabneys left for Mississippi. Mrs. Smedes tells us that she remembers the death of Grannie Harriett, born in tide-water Virginia long before

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[23] *M. Andanson is quoted in Astley's Collection as saying that the* "Bristol and Liverpool ships were the worst offenders." *It is also reported by Miss Kingsley, in* West African Travels, *that red was a favorite color of the spirits* ("spirits always like red") *and the most frequent charm-case was of that color* "to flatter and please" *them.*

[24] *Miss Beckwith mentions the same inclination to ascribe supernatural powers to objects used in Christian religion:* "hence a [Revivalist] preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down." *On the coast of Georgia this custom is the rule, but it is from an unwillingness to admit illiteracy and to depart from a convention. But Miss Beckwith tells of other superstitions that are surprisingly similar to those found on our sea islands. They were in all likelihood carried to Jamaica by the slaves of the loyalists who settled there following the Revolutionary War.*

[25] A curious instance of Catholic influence on an African superstition. Lampblack was used
● (177) to darken coffins in the old days, and a finger rubbed on the coffin was as effective as one dabbed in soot.

461 forms of art in which his African forebears excelled. However, it must be kept in
517 mind that *Art for Art's* sake never existed in the life of the African natives. Their
dances and their music were not separated from daily life, and until about 1900 this
(177) attitude persisted among our Negroes in the rural sections. Now it is the fashion to
imitate the white man, and the results are unspeakably dull.

533 Survivals, such as these I mention, have come to light—more or less as a side
17 issue—in searching for links connecting the dances and songs of our Georgia Negroes
with those of the African natives. As far as the songs are concerned, it would
be gratifying to be able to say definitely what proportion of African influence is
shown and what should be attributed to America. Unfortunately the methods of re-
533 search employed today by most musicologists do not produce results that can be
114 considered reliable. I would not accept as authoritative the findings of an anthropologist
17 who based his conclusions concerning the African food tabu found in
Georgia on what he learned from me. And I am no more willing to accept the word
of the musicologist who depends on transcriptions found in books, and on inadequate
phonograph records, to decide what the slave music owes to Europe.

In my experience transcriptions and records are both too susceptible to the biased interpretation of musicians trained in the European idiom. Far too many know nothing about African music, and do not care to learn anything about it at first-hand from the ex-slaves and their children. When they stop voicing the suspicion that the Negro spirituals derived their syncopation from Europe, probably from the Scottish folksong—then, and not before, shall I be ready to take their pronouncements seriously.

African Songs

533
191

FREEWILLUM

James Rogers (born in Liberty County) tells me this song, and the one following, were sung by Dublin Scribben. To use his own words: "Ole man Dublin he belong' to de Andersons o' Sunbury an' every day or two Miss Bertha would sen' me ober fo' him—to talk de ole African talk. I heered him, but I was too small to remember what he said, but I remember de songs 'cause I always p'int it on my mind about de t'ing." [51]

(177) The first song did not sound like English, but when Rogers divorced the words

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[51] *Tunes mean far more to the Negroes than words, I notice, and are not easily forgotten.*

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583 from the tune (all but the exclamatory phrase show the influence of the white man's
● (177) hymns), this is what I got:

(539)

Freewillum!
Gwine home to sine de oshun.
Relig-jun to-d'-New Jerusalem-I-bring-good-news-a-tatta-ho!
My soul sine de oshun.

The third line is extraordinary. Following fast on "New Jerusalem," the words run together up the scale into a falsetto squeak ending abruptly on "ho!" exactly as would be expected of songs from Africa. When a group of Negro school-children heard Rogers sing it, they went into spasms of laughter—and they had good cause, for the song is astonishingly strange.

2. ROCKAH MH MOOMBA

The second of Dublin's songs has few words that could pass for English, but, like several of the shouts, it ends with a stamp. The tune is not so wild as "Freewillum" and has not its distinctly primitive character. The last time I saw Rogers he told me that I was right in imagining it was a dance song. "When de ole man Dublin and his daughter Bessie get togedder she * shouted; when she say 'quank' de ole woman jump way over, and den de ole man jump, and den turn back again. Do de same t'ing ober, ebery time":

(539)

Rockah mh moomba
Cum bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
I rockah mh moomba
(Cum) bo-ba yonda
Lil-aye tambe
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!
Ashawilligo homasha banga
L'ashawilligo homasha quank!

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* One gender did duty for all in the old days, and the first "she" undoubtedly stood for "they," and the second "she" for "he."

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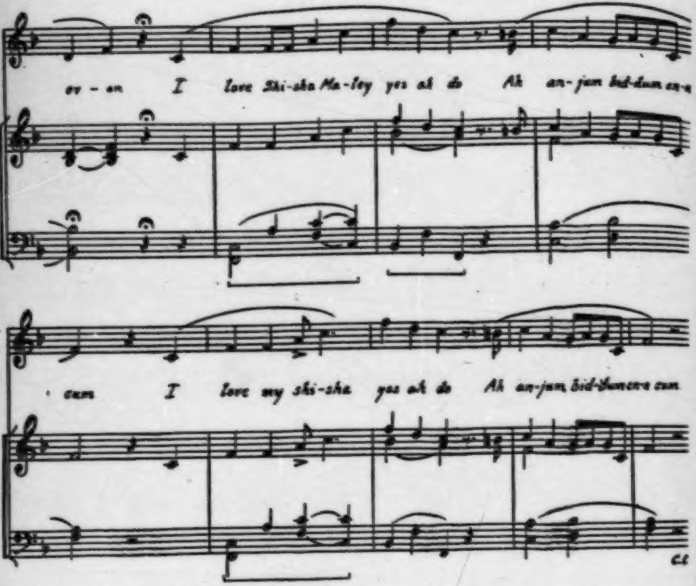
ov - en I love Shi-sha Ma-ley yes ah do Ah an-jum bid-dum en-a
cum I love my shi-sha yes ah do Ah an-jum bid-dumena cum

[163]

When Shisha Ma-ley made her response, grief apparently got the upper hand. She lapsed into her native tongue as well as the song-form of Africa,[38] and gave vent to her sorrow in these poignant lines:

Shisha Shalun gone en lay-vun
An sholl en gane en moan
Lor' Shisha!
Missa sholl en ganey moan
U-m-m My-Lor'l Missa-shao
Byum by e-e
U-m-m My-Lor'l Missa-shao
Byum by-e
(Repeat)

[179]

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[38] In spite of the fact that one verse shows the influence of the white man's hymns while the other reverts to the African form, there is a homogeneous quality that demonstrates the ability of the Negro to make the creation his own.

[p. 58]

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CHAPTER THREE

Afro-American Shout Songs

535 114 192 There appears to be a difference of opinion regarding the use of the word "shout" in designating the religious ring-dance, which was enjoyed during plantation days after prayer meeting and church service. Formerly writers thought that the Negro used the word because dancing was so sinful that it was wise to avoid even the name. But Dr. L. D. Turner has discovered that the Arabic word Saut (pronounced like our word "shout"), in use among the Mohammedans of West Africa, meant to run and walk around the Kaaba. I believe he has provided the right explanation of the difference in the meaning of the word, as used by the whites and the blacks, for I have seen the Negroes do the holy dance around the pulpit in their churches in such a manner.

535 Shouting appears to be of two types: Along the coast of Georgia and South Carolina the most popular form is the ring-shout, in which a number of dancers move counter-clockwise in a circle. (Illustration 22.)A Occasionally individuals are seen in church using the same rhythmic shout step. In North Carolina and Virginia, however, the solo performance is apparently the only form in use, and the ring-shout seems to be unknown.

535 171 178 (199) Those who have traveled in Africa, and have seen native dancing, are convinced that the shout of the American Negro is nothing more than a survival of an African tribal dance, and that the accompanying chants in their form and melody are quite as typical of Africa as the dance itself.[1] It is recognized, of course, that the words of the Old Testament have been substituted by the Negro for those of his native land. When the slaves grew more familiar with the English language, they evolved the more complicated religious songs that are now popularly called spirituals.

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[1] *Records* Nos. 6 and 10 of the series made in the Belgian Congo by the Denis-Roosevelt expedition are strikingly similar.

A. [For Illustration 22, see Category 535, plate facing p. 128--Analyst]

796 535 178 177 During ante-bellum days shouting was as much a part of the Sunday afternoon service as the sermon. By 1900, however, the more fashionable Negro preachers felt that this mode of worship could not be correct, since it did not conform to the conventional pattern of the white man's service; they began to frown upon the religious dance as they did upon the use of "Amen" and similar responses by the congregation. Even so, the hold of shouting is tenacious, and it is practiced during the Christmas holidays[2] to this day. All the country Negroes enjoy it immensely, 535 (123) though many are unwilling to admit that they know how to do it, as they consider the dance old-fashioned. It was years before I was permitted to see the St. Simon's Negroes indulge in this innocent performance. Why they should have been so secretive about such a pastime I cannot understand, unless—because the style of dancing is unlike ours—they were afraid I might laugh at it.

I shall never forget the night at the hall of the Queen of the South Society when I first saw the ring-shout. Hard board benches were an unimportant matter. Little had I suspected, when Margaret took care of my room at the Arnold House years before, that she could outdo the Ouled Nail Dancers, of Biskra—if she wished. As it was, she wiggled her hips shamelessly, held her shoulders stiff—at the same time thrusting them forward—kept her feet flat on the floor, and, with the usual rhythmic heel-tapping, progressed with real style around the circle—goodness knows how. White folks who attempt the step of the true ring-shout find it difficult exercise. Few young Negroes will do it, and the Big Apple, with the stamp of the white man's approval, has recently been more popular. Should shouting ever achieve the same vogue, its life would be prolonged.

It was good fun telling the St. Simon's Negroes—too self-conscious in earlier years to shout—how a professional performer, Tamiris, seen in New York was dancing spirituals. There is a wide gulf between such a professional and Cornelia, but I am certain that the white artist, no matter how skillful, could learn something in the way of form from this colored woman, whose lean fine frame, beaked nose, and keen eyes bespeak her Arab ancestry—on the male side. As for Edith—who, being a Murphy, is temperamental—every now and then she gives a stylized, angular performance as though copying the poses of the figures in Egyptian decorations. The way she holds her arms and hands is perfect. It positively hurts that I have no moving picture of her statuesque, rhythmic pauses, or the pause Gertrude (Illustration

(175) (527) [2] *Joe Armstrong tells me that before the War Between the States, "Jubilee time began on Monday before Christmas with a big eat of pork and baked yams."*

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533 539 "Dear brother, Plumb de line," continues the song; and the next verse follows the same construction and thought in: "You got t' live right," following which Old Quarterman always put in an effective "Yes Sir!" The above version, used by Katherine, appears to be more modern than that used by Josephine, who gets a far-off look when she sings:

Deacon deacon,[7]
Plumb de line.
Deacon deacon,
Plumb de line.
Deacon deacon,
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.
If you pray fo' me—
Plumb de line.
I pray fo' you
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
O plumber plumb,
Plumb de line.
You can't go t' Heaven till y'u plumb de line.

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(199) [7] The deacon "deacons" a song when he reads it two lines at a time for the benefit of any in the congregation who have not a hymn book or who cannot read. The custom of "lining out" and then singing a hymn was copied from the whites, who sang in this manner a century ago—perhaps later in sections where illiteracy prevailed. When done to short metre it is dreary beyond measure, but long metre sometimes has a barbaric charm.

KNEE-BONE

533 [461] [501] Fanny Kemble, in her *Journal*, describes some shout songs—also used for rowing, through a suitable change of rhythm—in the following words:

> I told you formerly that I thought I could trace distinctly some popular national melody with which I was familiar in almost all their songs; but I have been quite at a loss to discover any such foundation for many that I have heard lately and which have appeared to me extraordinarily wild and unaccountable. The way in which the chorus strikes in with the burden, between each phrase of the melody, chanted by a single voice, is very curious and effective, especially with the rhythm of the rowlocks for accompaniment.

But if Fanny Kemble had visited Africa and heard a few of the native songs (such as can now be purchased in gramophone shops specializing in foreign records), she would not have been puzzled by those sung by her husband's slaves.

What was said in 1839 concerning these "unaccountable" songs applies equally well to the songs given in this Chapter. And they are sung today, much as they were then, by descendants of the singers Fanny Kemble mentions. Side by side
• [177] with these semi-chants you hear songs which show clearly the white man's musical influence. The oldest Negroes say that they shouted after church Sunday afternoons
[796] and after prayer meeting at night. Before the shouting began, they sang spirituals and "lined out" hymns. The chances are that all three types were sung from the time the white man concerned himself with the religious instruction of his slaves. In Liberty County the members of the Midway community countenanced a revival in 1838, which lasted two years and was continued by the whites until 1842.

In the shout song, Knee-Bone, curious twists and exotic tones are employed—including the musical, yet nasal "ha-nnn"—that must be heard to be appreciated. None of our musical symbols is capable of suggesting the strange turns used in this, as well as others of the more primitive Afro-American chants. If records are not made soon, the elusive beauty which characterizes this type of singing will be irretrievably lost.

The shouter, in this musical chant, obeys instructions and bends the knee far down with the rhythm of the words "Bend my knee-bone to the ground." The rowing version calls for "knee-bone bend to the elbow bend." "Aye Lord" is often substituted for "Ha-nnn Lord."

9: Parrish B-4,5 (ca.1916-1941) 1942
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533 and over the chant is repeated, the rhythm all-important, always right; the sonorous
535 Old Testament words are just necessary sounds to carry along the melody, and the sequence of thought is nothing to worry about.

533 The words may be monotonous when read, but are not so when sung: "Adam" is turned into "Ad-u-m," with unusual tones and inflections all through the leading
539 lines, which show surprising invention. It is self-evident that the song belongs to the
● [177] African question-and-answer type, and bears no trace of European influence in its
[178] form:

Oh Eve where is Ad-u-m?
Oh Eve—Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam in the garden
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Faster: Lord called Adam
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam wouldn' answer
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Ad-u-m? (Rising inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.
Ad-u-m? (Falling inflection)
Pinnin' leaves.
Where't thou?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Adam naked
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Ain't y'u shame'?
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)
Lord I'm shame'
Pinnin' leaves. (repeat)

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533 them with the ring-games of the white people. Undoubtedly there is sound foundation
(177) for assuming that they owe something to English originals, for many show it,
either in the action, or in certain leading lines. On the other hand, they are more
melodious than the game songs of the whites; they employ an amusing variety of
dance steps, possess a contagious rhythm, and make use of vigorous hand clapping,
which is utterly unlike anything European. These same characteristics are emphasized
by Natalie Curtis-Burlin, in *Songs and Tales from the Dark Continent*, and by
N. G. J. Ballanta, in his article on "Music of the African Races." Their descriptions
of African dance songs might well apply to those of the Georgia Negroes prior to
1900. The similarity indicates that here again we may have such an equal proportion
of English and African influence as is found in the other groups of Negro songs.

Not being a scientist, I am privileged to make guesses, and one of them is tied
175 up with the history of our pioneers. In the early years of the nineteenth century, a
567 host of planters, with their families and slaves, moved to the richer lands farther
west. The number that went over the Federal Road into Alabama was so great that
a lone eastbound traveler reported from Georgia that he was never out of sight of a
long line of migrants. A good indication of the extent of the westward movement is
given in the fact that the population of Texas increased from four thousand in 1820
to almost twenty thousand in 1830. Most of the settlers were Southerners, who took
their slaves with them. In those frontier days the smaller property owners worked
175 with their slaves, and attended the same revivals. Because of this the songs and customs
567 of one were bound to influence those of the other. The more religious pioneers
were opposed to dancing, and used these innocent party games, with their accompanying
533 songs, as a substitute at their social gatherings long after they had been discarded
(177) by the fashionable planters of the southeastern seaboard, and relegated to
the Negroes and children. Original sin of course sees to the preservation of the fiddle
175 songs; we are told that, in the days before railroads provided an easy means of communication
533 with the outside world, social life in the newly-settled territories was
"sluggish in some ways and wild in others." In consequence the connection between
the worldly songs found on the coast of Georgia and the hill-billy and cowboy songs
of the slave states west of the Mississippi River seems to me self-evident.

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JOHN, JOHN

159 The temptation is strong to tell the clever sayings of Quarterman, but the songs
he sang, and not what he said, must take precedence. However, one incident which
159 has a bearing on history must be mentioned. Quarterman's mother was a Butler
567 slave, like Liverpool, but before Quarterman was born she was taken by Roswell
King in exchange for services as manager of the Butler estate, and placed on his
Liberty County plantation.

The last time that Liverpool and Quarterman were together at my Corner for
a "sing," Liverpool made use of the opportunity to deliver his customary eulogy
of Pierce Butler and his family. I saw that Quarterman was uneasy and fidgety.
The minute that Liverpool showed signs of stopping, Quarterman was on his feet
and told the audience what a superior "Maussa" he had had. Shades of Fanny
Kemble and all departed abolitionists! The irony of the situation is apparent to
those who have read what Fanny Kemble said in her *Journal* about Quarterman's
master, "Mr. K." I saw the meeting of "Mr. K.'s" two grandchildren, Miss Julia
King and her brother Audley, with Quarterman, and the delight of all three was
177 extremely significant. We read a good deal these days about the way the Negroes
567 "hate" the white people. But let me say that such was not the universal rule in the
old days under the patriarchal form of society.[7] The type of education given today,
instead of closing the breach between the races, appears to be widening it. I have
found only one ex-slave who shows bitterness, and that is toward a distracted mistress who, during war-time, exacted two tasks when one had been the usual requirement.

159 Quarterman sang many pretty hymns, but in the next breath he sang slave
533 songs that came "out of Maffew. You fine 'em right dere." When I tried to explain
that the words did not make the tune, he was puzzled. According to him all you
had to do was to go to the Bible and there was your song. There is more to the
idea than appears on the surface. You heard a verse read and at once its rhythm
fitted something that was sung in Africa. Perhaps this is why the Negroes call the
old songs "familiar tunes."

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[7] *It is evident from the story of "The Old-Time Negro," by Thomas Nelson Page, that "the relation which once existed all over the South between the old-time Southerner and the old-time darkey . . . still exists where the latter survives."*

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O DE ROBE

533 •177 The Irish ditch-diggers, employed in repairing the banks enclosing the rice fields of Glynn County, probably account for the Celtic lilt in this tune.[17] The Negroes have always been great borrowers, musically speaking, but, to my mind, that matters little when they make the material so completely their own that the result is entirely different, and often an improvement on the original. This was clearly the case with the ante-bellum melodies of the white plantation owners. A race which could turn dreary book hymns into living creations deserves great applause, and the less said about the source of its inspiration the better—unless from a desire to call attention to its superior musical gift.

533 539
Chorus: O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now
O de robe de robe my Lord
De robe all ready now.

My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now
My mother gone an' she lef' me heah
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now
Christian trials just begun
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now
Ferry boat goin' to carry us over
De robe all ready now.

(repeat chorus)

Joe contributes additional verses:

You get in trouble
De robe all ready now
Write to my Jesus
De robe all ready now.

Write to my Jesus t' sen' another angel
De robe all ready now
Send another angel t' trouble the water
De robe all ready now.

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[464] [567] [17] *In 1838–39 it was found that the work of digging the canal connecting Brunswick with the Altamaha River—opened its length but never used—was too heavy for the majority of the cotton-field Negroes. Only about two hundred of the original five hundred were retained, and a large number of Irishmen were brought in. From such a contact it can be seen how the word "wake" came to be substituted for "settin'-up," since the two customs—except for the drinking—are quite similar.*

175 are now losing—and the resistance of the slaves to "the miasma of the rice fields" en-
567 abled them to take care of the crop during the "pestilential season" with the min-
243 imum of white supervision. In consequence, all white residents who could leave[25]
[164] fled at nightfall to the "salts"—as the sea marshes were called—or to the dry and
higher pine land, whichever might be nearer, and the Negroes were left very much
to themselves. It requires no stretch of the imagination to assume that the beloved
[533] rhythms and dances that had been brought from Africa were kept alive in just this
[535] way. For which let me say—God be praised! I have never been able to believe that
[178] all virtue was vested in the white man or his music.

Another statement of Lyell's is so accurate that it should be given here. He tells
175 us that "The slaves identify themselves with the master, and their sense of their own
567 importance rises with his success in life." Mrs. Shadman, who knew all the ex-slaves
578 on St. Simon's, told me that Maum Rhina at Cannon's Point was heard to say: "I
hol' my head jus' as high as my Missus. I'se a Wylly nig'ah." The Wylly Negroes
always felt they were superior to those of the Hazzards, who lived on the adjoining
plantation. The feeling of animosity that has persisted for more than a century
among the descendants of the slaves of the two plantations may be because of the
duel over a boundary dispute, in which young Wylly was killed by his neighbor, Dr.
Hazzard.

In spite of the Negroes being passionately fond of music and dancing, the ac-
175 tivity of the Baptist and Methodist missionaries was such before 1845 that Lyell
797 tells us: "On the Hopeton Plantation above twenty violins have been silenced."
533 The ban on secular music was the same in the vicinity of Beaufort, South Carolina.
534 The editors of *Slave Songs of the United States* reported that they never saw a
musical instrument among the Port Royal freedmen, and mentioned that the last
violin, owned by a "wordly man," disappeared from Coffin's Point in 1861. They
175 expressed regret that they could not obtain enough secular songs to make a division
533 by themselves, and went on to say: "It is . . . already becoming difficult to obtain
these songs. Even the 'spirituals' are going out of use on the plantations, superseded
[177] by the new style of religious music, 'closely imitated from the white people.' " The
statement made by the editors that "The same songs are used for rowing as for
[184] shouting," holds true on the coast of Georgia, and it is interesting to find that the
identical tunes were favorites the length of the sea-island chain between the Peedee
and the Satilla Rivers. (Map, page xxxii.)

184 The similarity of the speech, customs, and music of the Gullah Negroes through-
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[25] *The terms of the overseer's contract required his presence on the plantation except under urgent circumstances.*

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184 out this section is not surprising to those who have studied its social and economic
114 conditions at first hand—or have carefully read *Seed from Madagascar* by Duncan
Clinch Heyward. This gentleman's words are authoritative. He learned planting
114 methods and the management of Negro labor at first hand on the Combahee swamp
plantations of his paternal ancestors in South Carolina and at the Clinch Plantation,
called Refuge, on the Satilla River in Georgia, where his maternal ancestors were
also rice planters.

In *American Humor*, Constance Rourke quotes a traveler as saying in 1795
175 that "The blacks are the great humorists of the nation." She goes on to tell us how
522 Negro humor has always been abundant, and how, from it, early minstrels drew as
533 from a primal source. She also says that many minstrels had lived in the South and
West and knew the Negro at first hand. One of them saw an old peddler of watermelons with a donkey cart in a Georgia town, and followed him about until he had
mastered his lingo, cries, and snatches of song, which may account for the similarity
175 of our Negro secular songs to those of the minstrel stage. Few of the white singers,
however, gave credit where it was due. Miss Rourke states that "Plantation owners
533 on the Mississippi had crews of black oarsmen who sang as they rowed and impro-
[501] vised good-natured verses to match the occasions of the day. . . .[28] A western poet
[461] declared that 'among the earliest original verses of the West were sundry African
[567] melodies celebrating the coon hunt and the vicissitudes of river navigation.' The
Negro was to be seen everywhere in the South and in the new Southwest, on small
farms and great plantations, on roads and levees. He was often an all but equal member of many a pioneering expedition. He became, in short, a dominant figure in spite
of his condition and commanded a definite portraiture."

Because of his position in democratic communities it is readily seen why the
533 songs of the Negro have left their stamp on those of the hill-billy and the cowboy;
177 and when he attended the same revival meetings as the whites—as he frequently did
—his mode of singing undoubtedly exerted as much influence upon their religious
songs as his secular music does today upon our radio singers.

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[28] They carried on a tradition that was characteristic of the South Carolina and Georgia coast. *Liverpool, who was stroke oar of the Butler Island crew of ten men, told me they rowed a cypress dugout, thirty-three feet long, made from one immense log. His favorite rowing song was "Zion," but others preferred "Knee-bone." Mrs. G. V. Cate tells us, in* Our Todays and Yesterdays, *"there was a spirit of rivalry among the planters to have the best boat . . . and a desire on the part of the slaves to sing the best songs. The oarsmen of one plantation would never sing the songs belonging to another plantation," and when a boat passed at night it would be known from the song to what plantation the singers belonged.*

[177] *In* A Walk across Africa, *Grant describes a very large canoe—hollowed out of an immense tree—that carried a ton and a half.*

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sionally a white servant. Grandparents, parents, children, and grand-children succeeded each other on the same plantation, growing up under intimate communal relationships but in almost complete isolation from the outside world. Thus their whole body of traditions, customs, superstitions, language, religion, and mental background remained in a state of arrested development and were handed down practically unchanged. 175 567 178

This picture is accurate for the period following the introduction of rice and cotton culture. There was, however, a period preceding the development of the large plantation system during which the South Carolina colonists made their living chiefly from small plantings and from naval stores and other products arising from the process of clearing the land: pitch, masts, beams, staves, and the like. It took years to build up a large plantation. Among the early land holders there were probably very few who had enjoyed a status of wealth and high education in the mother country. The typical settler was an English peasant, laborer, or middle-class man with very limited means who began with a small piece of land and gradually increased his holdings, acquiring indentured servants or slaves or both for his labor supply. There was here and there a man of wealth and distinction, but the typical colonist was a man of small means, one who spoke dialect English, as distinguished from literary English. The most numerous class in the colony before the slave trade began to flourish was composed of indentured servants, laborers, and artisans. They worked side by side with the Negroes and came into contact with them in various other ways, and it was from them that the slaves learned most of their English. 175 175 177 567 191

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175 Another important factor in the development of Gul-
177 lah is the tendency of the white man to reduce his lan-
191 guage to a lower level when communicating with someone
who does not speak English. In breaking in new Negroes
567 the white man used a sort of "baby talk." He simplified
197 tenses, inflections, gender, number, etc., until there was
left but a skeleton of literary English. What the Negro
heard, therefore, was something still more simplified than
the English dialect which the white servants and laborers
around him used.

Gullah was thus in the making, in fact, was probably fairly well made, before the large plantation régime came into existence. Successive additions of new slaves undoubtedly acquired their language education from the Negroes who had already assimilated to some extent the English of their white associates. Later, when rice and sea-island cotton culture made large plantations possible, the system of slave organization and discipline was such that slaves had few contacts with the class of whites who spoke the literary English.* Slaves were supervised by overseers whose speech was, as a rule, that of the English peasantry.

175 The Civil War and emancipation made very little dif-
567 ference in the lives of the slaves. Most of the Negroes
remained where they were. Indeed, if anything, they
were now more isolated than before, because many of the
white planters, made penniless by the war, left their
177 plantations and sought their fortunes elsewhere. On some

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*The house servants are excepted, of course. Occasionally one finds a Negro in the Gullah country who speaks very clearly and has a surprisingly large vocabulary. It nearly always turns out that he was a domestic servant in the home of some cultured planter.

of the Sea Islands today one can find Negroes who have 177•
not seen a white man for several years.

The Gullah area still coincides with the tidewater or 131
coastal plantation area. This is not due to the predominance of any particular type or tribe of Negroes, but to the isolation of the region as a whole from the up-country. In the early days travel in the rice area was chiefly by [506]
water. Indeed, it is only very recently that the chief [484]
towns of the low-country have been made easily accessible by land from the up-country. The low-country was and still is a geographical and cultural area distinct from the interior. Thus the dialect called Gullah was nourished 197
in isolation and has survived with little change because of 178
the continued isolation of its native area.

As has been pointed out by Bennett and others, the 197
Gullah dialect upon close examination displays certain minor local variations in phonology and idiom. St. Helena Island is different from Edisto Island, and both are different from some of the other localities. Furthermore, on one island one can sometimes detect variations between one neighborhood or plantation and another. These facts merely demonstrate the variety of speech backgrounds represented by the colonial families and the assimilation of these varieties by the slaves.

The same isolation which explains the persistence of 000
Gullah and its coincidence with the tidewater section is also responsible for the preservation of a seventeenth century mode of speech among the white people of that area. At the time of the settlement of Charleston, this mode of speech was standard English, in so far as there was such a thing at that time. It has come to be one of the earmarks

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example, which are often attributed to climate or lassitude 000
or to the influence of the Negro, are merely the continuation of the speech patterns of the English who settled the
South Atlantic coast.[8] The Negro took over the English 191
of the whites with whom he was associated, and he did it 177
remarkably well. White speech has undergone some de- 000
gree of change, moving a little nearer, perhaps, toward a standard American English, but, because of cultural isolation, the Negro lags behind, thus conserving the white man's linguistic past.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE DIALECT

There is considerable variation to be found in the 194
printed records of Gullah dialect. Part of this is due to 126
the local and individual variations in phonology and part is due to the personal element of the recorder. The

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with the plain people, who go on talking as they did in Shakespeare's day. There 000
were several dialect areas, the major areas being the Scotch or Northern, the Midland, the Eastern, the Southern, and the Southwestern. Coastal New England, Virginia, and South Carolina were settled largely from southern, southeastern, and southwestern England. More than a hundred years later the northern English and Scotch-Irish poured into America, dominating the pronunciation of the North and West, but not modifying greatly the speech of the oldest section of New England. The Scotch-Irish came into the South from the Middle States via the Shenandoah Valley, settling the piedmont and mountain regions. Spoken English in the latter sections is now a blend of the Scotch-Irish type with the southern English type which pushed westward from the Atlantic coast settlements in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. For a suggestive article setting forth a similar point of view, see Hans Kurath, "The Origins of the Dialectal Differences in Spoken American English." *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.

[8] Take the Southern *r* for example. The Negro had nothing to do with our losing it. References to the distinction between the rough or Scotch *r* and the smooth or southern English *r* occurred in the grammars and dictionaries of three hundred years ago. Evidence drawn from rhyming words and from plays written in dialect shows that the *r* of lower England was the same as our Southern *r*. A later reference in the third edition (1823) of Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language* is interesting: "In England, and particularly in London, the *r* in *lard, bard, card, regard*, etc., is pronounced so much in the throat as to be little more than the middle or Italian *a*, lengthened into *laad, baad, caad, regaad*." (Quoted by Kurath, *Modern Philology*, May, 1928.)

the use of archaic words and pronunciations; (3) the use 539
of corrupt forms of English. There is, of course, more 19
than this to the dialect, but these are really its distinguishing features as one gets them from the printed page. Per- 194
haps the most interesting feature of the dialect is the way it is spoken. Its rapid succession of sounds with their sudden and extensive changes in pitch is something which has to be heard to be understood.

A careful study of Gullah reveals that there is law 128
and order in the seeming chaos of this dialect. There is 193
no better way to gain an understanding of the nature and 194
development of Gullah than to take up in some detail its phonology and grammar. As the analysis proceeds it will (177).
become more and more apparent that practically every detail of the Gullah grammar and phonology is directly descended from the midland and southern English dialects.

PHONOLOGY[18]

194

Vowels

(*a*, *ea*, as in *art*, *heart*)

Words having *ar* or *al* plus a consonant, as in *art*, *cart*, *heart*, *calm*, are pronounced by most Gullah speakers as if the vowel were that found in *fat*, *that*, *hat*. This vowel is prolonged slightly, so that *heart* becomes *haat*, *lark* be-

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[18] In tracing the relation between the Gullah phonology and the seventeenth-century English dialect phonology, there is of course some difficulty in obtaining accurate accounts of the latter. In most of the English dialect areas, however, there has been no great change in the phonological traits, so that eighteenth and nineteenth century records are accurate enough in general for the purposes of this analysis. Various dictionaries, grammars, and dialect glossaries have been consulted, also the works of men like Halliwell, Skeat, Sweet, the Wrights, etc. The monumental works, *The English Dialect Grammar* and *The English Dialect Dictionary*, both edited by Joseph Wright, draw upon all sources, and I have relied upon them for much of my comparative data. (113)

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as the following will be heard occasionally: ***adswocate*** (advocate), ***bactize*** (baptize), ***bidout*** (without), ***cumposhashum*** (conversation), ***dimmycrack*** (Democrat), ***disgustuss*** (disgusting), ***fench*** (fence), ***muskick*** (musket) ***ruggidge*** (rugged), ***shoesh*** (shoes), ***stustifficate*** (certificate), etc. Some pronunciations of this kind are descended from English dialect, some represent the minimum of accuracy which it was necessary for the Negro to achieve in order to make himself understood, and others are individual idiosyncrasies of the sort that are likely to appear in dialect anywhere. 194

GULLAH GRAMMAR

The Gullah grammar is merely simplified English 193
grammar. Distinctions of person, number, gender, case,
and tense have all been reduced to the minimum. Some [191]
of the features of Gullah grammar were copied directly
from English dialect, and the rest seems easily explained [177]
on the basis of the simplified or "baby talk" type of
speech used by the whites in teaching the raw slaves to
understand English. The significant points of the Gullah [128]
grammar may be summarized briefly as follows. Only
those particulars in which the dialect deviates from the
standard language will be mentioned.

Nouns

As a rule the singular of a noun does duty for the plural. "Duh roostuh crow" may mean one rooster or ten roosters or any number of roosters. A sack of potatoes weighs fifty *pound,* a year has twelve *mont'.* However, *mens* is used for the plural of man, crabs are *crabbies,* while the ox is *oxin* and more than one is *two ox, t'ree*

802 two went fuh t'ief a cow," "Buh Lion nyam (ate) um 'all-two," etc. When referring to a particular month, the speaker says "de June mont'," "de Augus' mont'," etc.

Miscellaneous

193 There are many additional points which might be mentioned, but most of them are not particularly significant. However, there is one other feature of the grammar which is interesting and is characteristic of Gullah, namely, the interrogative *enty*. *Ain't* is usually *ent* in the dialect, and it is used just as white people use it. But the Negro has generalized *ain't it*, *ain't he*, etc., and has made *enty*, which he uses exactly like the French *n'est-ce-pas* and the German *nichtwahr*. Thus "'e gwine rain, enty?" "Oonah come tomorrow, enty?" "Dem was good apples, enty?" etc. The source of *enty* was the *ent*, *int*, *yent*, *yunt*, etc., which the English dialect speakers used for *isn't*. Since this word when used interrogatively was followed more frequently by *'e* (he) or *it* than any other words, the Negro really did not have to do much to the English dialect usage to achieve *enty*.[92]

VOCABULARY

Analysis of Gonzales' Glossary

177 19 It may seem that the English dialect paternity of Gullah has been unduly emphasized, but such is not the case. Indeed, it probably played an even larger part in the development of Gullah than has been indicated in this brief sketch.

192 A broad view of the nature of the Gullah vocabulary

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[92] See *E. D. G.*, pp. 244, 273.

THE QUESTION OF AFRICAN INFLUENCES IN THE DIALECT

Pronunciation and Syntax

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The supposition exists that there is considerable African influence in the American Negro's pronunciation of English. In his *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, Metfessel comments upon the characteristics of African languages and their possible effects upon the speech of the Negro in America. Speaking of a Negro whose song he had analyzed, he says, "He did not pronounce the [r] by our standard. The lips were brought together more nearly like [w]. Here is an indication of the trouble the colored man encounters with English consonants."[102] Again, having pointed out that in African languages every consonant is followed by its vowel, so that combinations of consonants cannot take place, Metfessel remarks, "So today, even when there are two consonants ending an English syllable, the Negro leaves out one, or even both when they are not necessary to convey the meaning."[103]

The same author points to other examples of African influence. In the phrase "Mount Zion," he shows that a singer carried over the *t* of *mount* and gave it to *zi* in *zion*. "This," he says, "is probably a carry-over from the African languages of the Negro."[104] Further, "The use of the vowel-ending syllable in African languages may have something to do with the presence of the enclitic which is written as *-a-*. As an example, Odell Walker sang *which-a-way* for *which way*."[105] Again, "The [Negro's] syllable divisions . . . do not always follow the authorized dictionary usage. Words like *nu-thin'*, . . .

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[102] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 85.
[103] *Ibid.*, p. 140.
[104] *Ibid.*, p. 32.
[105] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

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194 *cros-ses*, . . . *hea-ven*, . . . *Mo-ses*, . . . *hea-vy*, . . .
• 177 and *li-vin'* or *di-vin'*, . . . have the consonant shifted to
178 the last syllable. There is room for speculation as to whether the vowel-ending syllable of African languages is not the cause of this transfer. Each of the first syllables above ends in a spoken vowel because of the shift of the consonant."[106] Further, "When the Negro makes an attempt at [b*i*te][107] instead of [*ah*] in speaking *I*, he sometimes uses the diphthongal characteristics found in Africa. That is, the [*ah*] is touched very lightly and [m*ee*t] is jerkily given the greater stress. . . . A still different response to the trouble the English diphthong gives the Negro is found in his sharp division of some syllables into two vowels, somewhat the same, as *da-ade* and *cha-ain*."[108]

Most of these types of examples which Metfessel mentions have already been taken care of in the sections on phonology and grammar.[109] Their English dialect origin is too patent to need any comment.

Coming more specifically to the Gullah dialect, one finds such statements as the following. "There is, too, the same confusion of gender and of number, based, I surmise, upon indifference in Africa to these linguistic dis-

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[106] *Phonophotography in Folk Music*, p. 140.

[107] That is, the sound of *i* in *bite*.—G. B. J.

[108] Metfessel, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

[109] Except perhaps syllable division and diphthongs. As for syllabication, anyone acquainted with white dialect speech knows that numerous words are divided like the examples cited by Metfessel. The Negro pronunciation will in general follow the white pronunciation in a given area. To cite a single example, most of the people, white and Negro, in northern Texas where I was born said *plan-tation* (a proper division), but in the South Atlantic States whites and Negroes generally say *plant-ation*. As for diphthongs, I think that an analysis of specific cases shows that no general tendency prevails in Negro speech except the tendency to copy English dialect pronunciation. Under the various vowel sounds treated above will be found specific examples of diphthong pronunciation in the Gullah.

tinctions."[110] "With characteristic laziness, these Gullah 194
Negroes took short cuts to the ears of their auditors, using 177
as few words as possible. . . . Yet, notwithstanding this 178
economy of words, the Gullah sometimes incorporates into his speech grotesquely difficult and unnecessary English words; again, he takes unusual pains to transpose numbers and genders."[111] "They have reshaped perhaps 1700 words of our language by virtue of an unwritten but a very definite and vigorous law of their own tongue."[112]

In view of the various facts which have already been brought out in the discussion of phonology and grammar, it is doubtful if any of the Gullah traits mentioned in the foregoing quotations can be attributed to African influences. The Negro does not take "unusual pains" to do this or that. He has merely responded to the speech patterns with which he was confronted in the low-country by assimilating them in practically every detail. His speech comes nearer being a duplicate of eighteenth century English dialect to which he was exposed than the speech of some of our immigrant groups, say the Germans and Scandinavians, comes to being a copy of nineteenth century English.

About the only instance which might be considered as representing a direct and consistent African influence is found in the change of voiced and voiceless *th* to *d* and *t* respectively. Now, there are no *th* sounds in the west African languages,[113] and the Negro, on first hearing these sounds, would refer them to the sounds most like them in his own language, because, like the German learning Eng-

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[110] E. C. Parsons, *Folk Lore of the Sea Islands*, *Preface*, p. xx.

[111] Gonzales, *The Black Border*, p. 10. [112] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[113] In fact, with three or four exceptions, none in any of the African languages. See Koelle, *Polyglotta Africana*.

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194 lish, he would not possess vocal habits which would per-
177 mit him to reproduce such strange sounds off hand. He
178 would, therefore, fall back on the substitutes *d* and *t*. But
it is certain that in the English dialect with which the slave came in contact in the South Carolina low country this same substitution already existed to a greater or lesser degree, and it is probable that Englishmen who ordinarily pronounced *th* used the *t* and *d* forms in addressing their Negroes. It is therefore impossible to decide whether the positive English pattern or the negative African trait was the primary factor. It is certainly unnecessary to turn to Africa for an explanation; yet it might be logically argued that, even if the English substitution of *d* and *t* for *th* had not existed, the Negro would have made a similar substitution.

Speed and Pitch Inflection

194 The Gullah speech flows very rapidly, so rapidly, in fact, that the up-country Southern white man is astonished at the spectacle of Negroes who do not drawl. It is a question whether there is not some African influence here. It is certain that the English of Shakespeare's time was spoken more rapidly than typical white speech in the South today, so that the rapidity of Gullah speech might in part be accounted for on that basis, but the possibility remains that this may be due to the African mode of speaking.

One of the things which impresses a person on first hearing Gullah is the frequent and extensive change of pitch in the voice of the speaker. Whether this phenomenon is a survival of the musical accents used in the languages of West Africa or is descended from English di-

174 from the West Indies. The variety of African language
192 groups and the conditions of slavery were such that it was
difficult for any particular African word to survive over a large area through its use by slaves alone. But here and there planters would observe certain native words used by a few individuals to designate well known objects like terrapins, peanuts, etc., and they would take up these words in their conversations with slaves. Then, finding that other planters had encountered similar words, they began to use the best known ones in everyday speech and in writing, thus giving them a sound basis for survival. Then, too, there is the probability that a few African words were introduced directly into English by white sailors and traders who had picked them up in the various slave stations on the African Coast.

Naturally enough, in Englishing certain African words, the Southern white man has added an *r* to the spellings so that it will be seen and not heard. He writes *cooter, goober, pindar,* but as a rule he pronounces them as the Negroes do, their African originals being *kudu, gingooba,* and *mpinda.*

THE PERSISTENCE OF GULLAH

19 Smith has attributed some of the characteristics and
● 177 the persistence of Gullah to the native quality of the
178 "Gullah tribesmen." He thinks that "their resolute and
persistent nature evidently assisted in impressing their dialectal characteristics on weaker and more plastic Negroes from elsewhere brought in contact with them, and definitely fixed for two hundred years the tonality of the Negro dialect of the Carolina and Georgia Coast."[132]

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[132] *Gullah,* p. 8.

Williams relates the following incident as an illustra- 19
tion of the unusual persistence of Gullah: "More, per- 177
haps, than a hundred years ago certain Negroes were car- 178
ried from a rice plantation in Colleton County and put on a cotton plantation in Barnwell District, as it was called then, but to this day (1896) the older ones of that set of Negroes, who grew up before the war, speak as pure Gullah as their grandfathers and grandmothers spoke on Ashepoo. They seem to have been scarcely affected in their low-country Gullah speech by the white people that were numerous and all around them and the Negroes native to that neighborhood, who talked so differently to themselves."[122]

It is not at all necessary to predicate an ethnic basis for the survival of the low-country Negro speech. Does not the low-country white speech show the same persistence? And when a Charlestonian or Edistonian moves to the up-country, does it not take several generations to obliterate the low-country characteristics of the speech of his family? The instance cited by Williams merely illustrates the fact that speech patterns are like other human culture patterns. Even in a strange environment they tend to persist indefinitely unless the surrounding group uses pressure to alter them or the immigrant group considers it positively advantageous to substitute the new patterns for their old ones. The persistence of Gullah is merely the persistence of a set of speech patterns in a more or less isolated cultural area.

Most of the younger generation of sea-island Negroes [872]
have been to school for periods ranging from a few days

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[122] *De Ole Plantation*, Preface, p. v.

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19 to seven or eight years. Is this process not rapidly de-
177 Gullahizing the Negro dialect? Probably not. It de-
178 pends a great deal upon the teacher, his own speech, his
872 training, and the possibility of giving the pupils an ade-
quate exposure to standard English. Visiting the humble
schools of the various islands, one is struck with several
[875 facts. The teacher is nearly always a native, which is as it
should be. He, or she, more often the latter on St. Hel-
ena, has little training beyond the school in which he
teaches, he receives a mere pittance for his work and must
do other things to support himself, and as a rule he teaches
about seven grades in a one-room building.

I have heard pupils recite in most of the schools on St. Helena Island. Most of them spell like this: *h-e-a-r-t, haat; m-a-n, mahn; t-h-a-t, dat; w-i-n-e, vine; v-i-n-e, wine; o-i-l, ile;* and the teacher soon despairs of trying to change their habits to any noticeable degree. I once listened to a sixteen year old boy trying to read correctly the simple sentence, "I will give them to the men." With the possible errors *vill, gib, dem, de, mans, mens,* there was not much chance of his ever reading every word correctly. His teacher had him repeat it again and again, but as fast as she made him say one word properly he would go wrong on another one. Finally, after some fifteen trials, she gave up and let him read on in his own fashion. With only a few minutes each day devoted to reading, and with many teachers teaching in the vernacular, there is little chance that the schools will make any serious inroads in the dialect in the present generation. Fifty years, perhaps even a hundred years, from now, the English of the sea-island Negroes will still be looked upon as something unusual.

the hymns, they certainly are not sung with anything like the physical and spiritual satisfaction which accompanies the singing of the old spirituals.

Every church has its choir and choir leader, and some of the churches have a gallery in the rear where the choir sits. Song books of the modern type are purchased for [214] the choir, and new songs are practised patiently in order that they may be introduced in church.[2] The congregation listens with pride, forbearing to join in unless something very familiar is sung. These songs differ from the old hymns in that they are sung through, without lining, in ordinary tempo and with fair harmonizations, but they, too, fall far short of the spirituals in beauty of execution and in unity of emotional expression.

It is the spiritual that really gives the Negroes a chance to express themselves in song. Everyone on the island knows the spirituals and loves them. Church services and praise meetings may often open with hymns, but they end with spirituals. In Penn School chapel exercises they are always sung, and they are the favorites in all the other schools on the island. Scarcely a meeting of a club or a society opens without the singing of a spiritual. Standing in the darkness near a small praise house, hearing the mellow voices of the little group within, abandoned for the moment to a spiritual, one realizes anew that this kind of song has an all-important function in Negro life.

St. Helena, being in an isolated culture area, is an excellent laboratory for the study of the spirituals. Here is found little of that racial inferiority complex which for

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[2] I observed that several of the choir songs recently introduced on St. Helena are songs which were common in the small white churches fifteen years ago. This is an interesting fact which bears upon the questions to be discussed later. (177)

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large collections of authentic native songs from West and Central Africa, the third analysis noted above cannot be carried out at present. Reference will be made, however, to the characteristics which various authorities have assigned to African music. The labors of Mr. Ballanta will, it is hoped, supply this need in the near future. The deficiency as far as the present study is concerned, is not as great as it might seem, for the first step in any event should be the comparison of American Negro music with American white music in order to determine whether the former is distinctive enough to warrant the search for its African origin.

The following specific points of comparison are suggested:

- I. Words of Songs
  - A. General subject matter
  - B. Specific lines
  - C. Forms or patterns
- II. Tunes
  - A. Modes and scales
  - B. Modulations
  - C. Intervals
  - D. Endings on other than keynote
  - E. Melodic patterns
- III. Rhythm
  - A. Metre
  - B. Syncopation

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When the substitution of the dominant culture for the slave culture has proceeded to the extent that it has in the case of the American Negro, logic favors first the premise that the root of any particular culture trait of the American Negro is apt to be found in the white culture of the

121 177 533 slavery period. To say the least, anyone who is studying the relation of African music to American Negro music would be omitting the first step of the ladder if he failed to acquaint himself with the song environment of the Negro in slavery. As good a musician and scholar as Krehbiel analysed over 500 Negro songs, mostly spirituals, and pointed out certain things as characteristic of Negro songs without even suggesting that these characteristics ought to be checked up similarly in the white religious songs of a hundred years ago.

The American Cultural Background of the Negro Spiritual

121 White, in his *American Negro Folk-Songs*, has covered the American historical background of Negro religious song so well that it would be superfluous to do more than give a brief sketch here. Certain points, however, need to be emphasized.

000 American white hymnology has at least two distinct heritages. One is represented by the dignified, formal, poetic hymns of Watts, Wesley, Newton, Cowper, and others. The other is the heritage of the great revival and camp-meeting movement which reached its height in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of this movement and especially of the type of religious song which it ushered in, little is known.

First a word as to the general conduct of the people during revivals. From Jonathan Edwards, one of the earliest writers to describe the movement, the following quotations are taken:

> . . . I confess that when I see a great crying out in a congregation, in the manner that I have seen it, when those things are held

000 of which disappeared with the decline of the fervor for camp meetings. And to these might be added, since secular tunes have time and again "got religion," the vast body of white everyday social songs, traditional ballads, children's game songs, nursery rhymes, etc.

533 •177 Was the Negro in direct contact with the white revival song? The records of evangelists, travelers, and others show that he was often present at the meetings of the whites.[14] Bellinger, describing one of his big meetings, wrote: "The negroes are out in great crowds, and sing with voices that make the woods ring."[15] In 1845 a South Carolinian wrote that there were more Negro Baptists and Methodists than white in the South and that "almost everywhere they have precisely the same opportunities of attending worship that the whites have, and besides, special occasions for themselves exclusively."[16]

There is one more point which is pertinent here: prior to the Civil War nothing had been said about the Negro possessing a distinctive type of religious song. A few travellers had spoken of certain Negro songs as wild, barbaric, fugue-like, etc.,[17] but most of them commented on the Negro's knowledge of white religious songs. Sir Charles Lyell said of some Negro boatmen on the estate of Hamilton Couper, "occasionally they struck up a hymn,

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(113) [14] See for example, the works of Asbury and Dow; also Woodson, *History of the Negro Church*; Jones, *The Religious Instruction of the Negroes*; and various local histories of Methodist and Baptist churches.

[15] *Stray Leaves*, p. 17.

(113) [16] *Two Letters on Slavery in the United States*, by J. H. Hammond, Columbia, S. C., 1845, p. 25. Quoted by White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, p. 37.

[17] Hundley, in his *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, thought that the Negroes had certain "wild choruses and lullaloos, which their fathers must have brought with them from Africa," but he described their religious songs as "not so peculiar and striking." P. 348.

taught them by the Methodists, in which the most sacred subjects were handled with strange familiarity."[18] Another English writer wrote:

> Just before bed-time more solemn sounds are heard: the negro is demonstrative in his religion, and loud and musical were heard every evening the hymns. . . . Remarkable for correctness are their songs, and both men's and women's voices mingled in soft though far-sounding harmony. Some old church tunes I recognized.[19]

Another writer stated that

> . . . the loudest and most fervent camp-meeting singers amongst the whites are constrained to surrender to the darkeys in "The Old Ship of Zion" or "I Want to go to Glory."[20]

William Howard Russell mentioned "those wild Baptist chants about the Jordan in which they (the Negroes) delight."[21] One of the most significant statements, however, is found in a little-known sketch by William Cullen Bryant. The poet visited a tobacco factory in Richmond in 1843. In a certain room about eighty Negroes sang as they worked. Among other comments on the singing, he quoted the proprietor of the factory as follows:

> "What is remarkable," he continued, "their tunes are all psalm tunes and the words are from hymn books; their taste is exclusively for sacred music; they will sing nothing else. Almost all these persons are church members; we have not a dozen about the factory who are not so. Most of them are of the Baptist persuasion; a few are Methodists."[22]

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[18] *Second Visit to the United States of North America*, etc., pp. 244-5.

[19] Rev. Wm. Wyndham Malet, *An Errand to the South in the Summer of 1862*, p. 49. In the library of Dr. Yates Snowden, Columbia, S. C.

[20] Hundley, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

[21] *My Diary North and South*, p. 143.

[22] Quoted (probably from New York *Evening Post*) in DeBow's *Review*, n.s., I, 326 (1850).

533 •177 To the question with which one musician dismissed the matter of the Negro's white musical heritage—"Where is that wonderful matrix of hymnology out of which has grown these song jewels of Negro spirituals?"[23]—it may now be replied that such a matrix existed, that the Negro was familiar with it, and that it probably left a much deeper imprint upon him than has generally been supposed. The extent to which the Negro spiritual is based upon a white pattern will appear in the more detailed comparisons which follow.

The Spiritual in Relation to White Revival Songs and Other Folk Songs

WORDS

General Subject Matter. The subjects treated in the spirituals are so much the same as those in the white songs as to need only a passing comment. Heaven, hell, the judgment, appeals to the sinner, Biblical characters, Satan, the jubilee, the gospel trumpet, the gospel ship, the chariot, the river of Jordan, the union band, etc., are the leading subjects in both the Negro and the white songs.

Most of the early collectors of Negro spirituals, being ignorant of their history, read meanings into them which were not there originally. The desire for freedom expressed in many songs might have come to represent physical freedom to the slave in time, but these songs were either white songs which had reference to freedom from sin, or songs written for him by abolitionists.[24] New meanings and a few new stanzas no doubt grew out of the Civil War, but such new stanzas are rare. For example, the

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[23] R. Nathaniel Dett, ed., *Religious Folk Songs of the Negro*, p. xv.

[24] On this point, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 50-51.

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song known as *Who'll Jine Dat Union* on St. Helena Island might with very little imagination be taken as a Negro Civil War song, but it existed, with the possible exception of one stanza, as a white revival song at least twenty years before the Civil War began.

Specific Lines. A list of all of the lines which are either very similar or identical in white and Negro songs would be extensive. The following lines are from a single white song book:[28]

Ride on, Jesus.

O, there will be mourning.

O, Lord, remember me.

Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

If you get there before I do,
Look out for me, I'm coming too.

I have some friends before me gone,
And I'm resolved to travel on.

I am bound for the land of Canaan.

We're going to see the bleeding Lamb.

O, could I hear some sinner pray.

Come to Jesus just now.

Jesus, my all to heaven is gone, etc.

I want to wear the crown.

[28] *Millennial Harp.*

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533 King Jesus is my captain.

•177 Lay this body down.

We're on our journey home.

There will be a mighty wailing.

O sinner, you will tremble.

Then we'll shout, our sufferings over.

I will be in this band, hallelujah.

As I was walking out one day,
And thinking about this good old way.

O shout on, children, shout you're free,
For Christ has bought your liberty!

You'll hear the trumpet sounding.

You'll hear the thunders roaring.

You'll see the world a burning.

Oh, the Bible is my compass.

Where are now the Hebrew children?

You will see the graves a bursting.

Then the warfare will be ended.

Gabriel's going to blow.

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Blow ye the trumpet, blow.

And Sabbaths never end.

A few more days, or months, at most;
My troubles will be o'er.

Arise and shine . . .
The year of jubilee.

Bid rocks and mountains fall on them,
But rocks and mountains fly.

Angels, roll the rock away.

I never shall forget the day
When Jesus washed my sins away.

It's the old ship of Zion, etc.

These are not all the lines that might be cited. In *The Christian Lyre, The Revivalist, Zion Songster, The Southern Harmony and Musical Companion,* and other song books there are many other parallels.[26] In addition to lines which are the same or nearly the same in both white songs and Negro spirituals, there are numerous instances where the wording of a spiritual is apparently merely a simplification of the white phraseology.

There are not very many instances in which a white song was taken over in its entirety by the Negroes.[27] The line, or at most the stanza, seems to be the unit of transfer.

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[26] See, for example, White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 48-9.

[27] More instances exist, however, than have been admitted even by writers like White, and I am convinced that if we had complete records of the white songs which were never published we would find a surprising number of cases where practically an entire song was taken over by Negroes.

533 In view of the illiteracy of the slave and the custom of
177 lining out songs among illiterate whites and Negroes, it is natural that the line or the short stanza should have become the unit remembered. Just as the white people took the old church hymns and converted them into something less dignified and less difficult to learn, so did the Negroes.
000 The whites took Watts' hymn, "Jesus My All to Heaven Is Gone," inserted refrain lines and chorus and made a quite different song of it. In the *Millennial Harp* alone there are two versions of this hymn.[28] One has the refrain, "I want to wear the crown," and a chorus consisting mostly of "My heart says praise the Lord"; the other has the refrain, "Jesus says he will be with us to the
533 end," and a simple chorus. Illiterate people depend upon memory, and neither whites nor Negroes limited them-
177 selves to the traditional hymn stanzas. Any stanza of a hymn or of some other religious song was likely to be taken up and used wherever it would fit. The process was not peculiar to the Negroes. Indeed, they not only derived the pattern from the whites but some of their songs of this type were undoubtedly taken from the whites after the latter had manufactured them.

533 *Form or Pattern.* Several writers have suggested that
171 the repetitive refrains and choruses of the spirituals, together with the custom of singing with solo, or leader, and chorus, are distinctive traits of Negro songs.[29] Take *Swing Low*, for example. Every line is followed by the

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[28] See I, 66; II, 36. In this connection, see an item in the New York *Times*, April 11, 1865, from Richmond in which the correspondent related that the Negroes held a "Jubilee Meeting" during which they sang this same song, with the refrain, "I'm going to join in this army."

[29] See Ballanta, *Saint Helena Island Spirituals*; J. W. Work, *Folk Songs of the American Negro*; James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of Negro Spirituals*.

533 probably never be determined, for our knowledge of *how*
171 the whites sang their songs is fragmentary.

The most logical way to view the leader-chorus pat-
533 tern in Negro songs is to think of it as, partially at least,
171 a product of the cultural situation during the time the Ne-
• 177 gro was taking over the white revival songs. The pat-
tern was certainly used by whites, especially when a new
song was being taught to people who were nearly all il-
literate. The pattern was thus present for the Negro to
copy, and, further, the same condition of illiteracy among
Negroes necessitated the use of the pattern when new
533 songs were being taught them. There is, of course, the
possibility that this style of singing represents a survival
178 of an African custom, as has been claimed by Natalie
Curtis-Burlin, James Weldon Johnson, N. G. J. Bal-
lanta, and other writers.

TUNES

533 *Modes.* The distribution of tunes according to the modes in which they are sung is an interesting and significant point of comparison. In his *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, Krehbiel reported the results of an analysis of 527 Negro songs.[27] The general modal distribution of these songs, compared with a similar analysis of 414 white religious songs,[28] is as follows:

	NEGRO SONGS PER CENT	WHITE SONGS PER CENT
Major	83.8	78.9
Minor	11.7	18.6
Mixed or vague	4.4	2.4

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(533) (171) ne man came down the aisle singing certain words, and hundred of voices replied with certain words.

[27] Includes about 50 secular songs. Most of the songs are from the United States, but a few are from the West Indies. Krehbiel, p. 43. Fisher (*Seventy Negro Spirituals*) made a similar analysis, with about the same results.

[28] From *The Christian Lyre* and *Millennial Harp*.

533 171 fourth and seventh tones omitted, is said by Krehbiel, Work, Dett, Ballanta, and others to be the outstanding characteristic of native African music. Here, then, would seem to be positive proof of the influence of African music on the spirituals. However, several points of interest need to be discussed here.

First, the pentatonic scale is not entirely unknown to the white songs, as it is found in nearly 10 per cent of all tunes in the major mode in the two books studied. This scale seems to be a sort of simplified medium of musical expression, for it is the basis of the music of most of the less civilized peoples, and is found in the simpler songs of the English and Americans—the nursery songs, children's game songs, folk ballads, unsophisticated religious songs—to a greater extent than among the art songs.

533 177 Some of the writers on Negro songs have pointed out the similarity of Negro and Scotch music in respect to pentatonic tunes, but they have always vigorously denied any possible Scotch influence on Negro music. In this, they are in error. They contend that there were not enough Scotch in the South in colonial and ante-bellum days to have left any influence on the music of the time. This contention falls down in the face of facts which show that, aside from the great wave of Scotch-Irish migration which came from the North and settled in the Southern piedmont and mountain regions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there was a considerable sprinkling of both Highland and Lowland Scotch in the Southern slave states, entering by way of Charleston, Wilmington, and Norfolk. Estimates for colonial North Carolina,

for example, place the proportion of Scotch at from 11 to 533
40 per cent of the total white population.[42] 177

But, what is of greater significance, the folk-song culture of the English and the English-speaking Scotch is essentially the same.[43] This is especially true of the Lowland Scotch and the Northern English, and this is the area from which came the majority of people whom we call Scotch-Irish. The use of the "gapped" scale turns out not to be confined to the Scotch, but to be characteristic of folk singing in England, Scotland, and Ireland.[44] At any rate, whether one calls them Scotch, Scotch-Irish, or English, the music which these people brought to this country is in many respects similar to the music of the Negro spirituals. Recent work has shown that the traditional English and Scottish folk music has survived to a surprising extent in this country. What of the presence of the pentatonic mode in this music? 533 171 177

In his *South Carolina Ballads*, Professor Reed Smith 000 published fourteen traditional ballad tunes collected from white people. Four, or 28 per cent, of these are pentatonic. From the Appalachians, where these old songs have survived best, larger collections are available. In the great collection contained in Campbell and Sharp's *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, 324 folk tunes are published. The "gapped" scale is predominant. The pentatonic, with fourth and seventh tones omitted, is the outstanding scale of these songs. The proportions of which they brought with them to America and which they have preserved so well in the mountains. The Scotch-Irish and English peasantry, with their love of song and their religious zeal, undoubtedly played a conspicuous part in shaping the folk music of the camp meetings. The revival movement came along on the heels of the great migration from Pennsylvania to the Southern piedmont. In fact, some of the editorial writers of a century ago attributed the successes and the excesses of the revivals to the Scotch-Irish. 000

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[42] See U. S. Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p. 117. The highest estimate, 40 per cent, is made by Professor R. D. W. Connor of the University of North Carolina. See his *History of North Carolina*.

[43] Campbell and Sharp, *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, Introduction, p. xix.

[44] See Cecil J. Sharp, *English Folk-Songs*; also Campbell and Sharp, Introduction.

The theory that the pentatonic scale in the Negro spirituals is a distinctive trait owing its origin to African music loses some of its force. For it is now just as plausible to say that, since the general tendency has been for the Negro to adopt white culture patterns, and since the proportion of pentatonic tunes in the spirituals is the same as in the English and Scottish folk songs, the Negro took over his religious folk songs from the folk productions of the English and Scotch-Irish. At any rate it cannot be logically maintained that a trait which exists in English folk music in America to the same extent as it does in Negro folk music is a *distinctive* trait of Negro music. 533 171 177

The absence of the seventh tone in the tunes of the spirituals is statistically next in importance. This, however, is as frequent in the white revival songs as in the spirituals—16.2 per cent in the former and 17.6 per cent in the latter. Analysis of the collections of English ballad music surviving in America shows about the same proportion of no-seventh tunes. Obviously there is nothing distinctively Negro here. The history of the missing seventh in English folk music is similar to that of the pentatonic 000

> the village organist struggling to force the sharpened seventh, especially of tunes in the minor mode, upon the unwilling ears of a rustic congregation?[50] 000
>
> This use of the flatted seventh, as though it were a leading-note, is often to be found in folk-airs, especially in those of England. The modern musician finds, in this practice, that which is so directly at variance with all that he believes to be natural, that I have known him to question the fact that folk-singers really do sing such phrases. They do, however, and the effect is often very beautiful.[51]

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Ballanta has tried to distinguish between the Negro's flat seventh and the use of that tone in white music.[52] With the Negro, he says, the tone is a regular or normal element in the scale, not necessitating any modulation, while in white music the occurrence of this tone always induces a modulation to the key of the subdominant, as from C-major to F-major, for example. Ballanta is quite right if he is thinking of conventional white music, for training in our present melodic system has made it difficult for musicians to conceive of the use of a flat seventh without modulating to a flatter key. The distinction which he claims for this tone in Negro music, however, is exactly the same thing which characterizes the English folk use of the flat seventh, namely, as a natural tone in the scale inducing no modulation. This use of it occurs in the traditional ballads and other songs surviving in the Appalachians. [177] Since the Negro was in contact with the English folk music culture throughout the period of slavery, it is just as logical to suppose that his use of the flat seventh was borrowed as to believe that he brought it from Africa.

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[50] *English Folk-Song*, pp. 55-6.

[51] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-7.

[52] *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, Foreword, xiv.

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i. e., neither major nor minor, like the interval between the two notes of the Cuckoo's song, when the Spring is waning. Apparently, the folk-singer, not having any settled notions with regard to the pitch of the third note of the scale, varies it according to the character of the phrases in which it occurs.[54] 533 171

To summarize the present section: (1) Certain peculiarities of mode and scale supposed to be characteristic of the Negro spirituals are found in a sample of white revival tunes of a century ago to a sufficient extent to raise a question as to the validity of the claim that they are distinctive traits of the spirituals. (2) A study of English folk music in its native land and as it survives in America reveals that every supposedly distinctive scale trait of the spirituals is found in the English folk music, and that the proportions of each trait are practically the same in both musics.

Suppose for a moment, however, that the scale and modal peculiarities of the spirituals are African survivals. Where would one expect to find these traits preserved best? Naturally in isolated places like the Sea Islands where the Negroes have been off the path of social change and have had relatively little contact with white people, especially since the Civil War. What light do the St. Helena spirituals throw upon this question? 533 178 [177]

The Allen collection (1867) contained 55 spiritual tunes from St. Helena. Of these 80 per cent were major and 14 per cent were minor. These proportions are about the same as in the white hymns of that time. The pentatonic, which should have been very frequent here if it is an African survival, is found in about 13 per cent of the major

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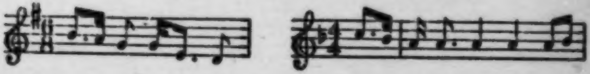
[54] *English Folk-Song*, p. 71.



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But syncopation is not an outstanding characteristic of the white tunes, and it seems likely that, aside from the possibility of some influence from the "Scotch snap," this is one of the few elements in the spirituals which is unmistakably traceable to African patterns. 171 177 178

Some Specific Instances of Kinship Between Negro Spirituals and White Revival Tunes

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Now that the background of white and Negro religious life in the United States has been described and the similarity of the various traits in the spirituals and in white revival songs has been pointed out, it is time to indicate whether or not any authentic instances of borrowing can be cited.

First it should be reiterated that only a small part of the total number of white religious folk songs is available for study because of their gradual disappearance and displacement by new tunes and by a more conventional type of song. Furthermore, to check up the relations between 500 spiritual tunes and about as many white religious tunes, to say nothing of the vast possibilities of white secular music influencing Negro religious music, is a task which might well require ten years of study. Only those instances which have become apparent in the course of a few months' work with one or two white hymn books and the best known collections of spirituals can be cited in this discussion. 121 177 533

The editors of *Slave Songs*, the first collection of spirituals, realized that it was not always easy to separate 177 533

177 533 white songs from Negro songs.[72] Their knowledge of white religious backgrounds was very limited, and they were strongly influenced by sentimental attitudes in their decisions as to what constituted a real Negro song. Having rejected as "spurious" *Give Me Jesus*, *Climb Jacob's Ladder*, and *I'll Take the Wings of the Morning*, which they found in the current Methodist hymn books, they included several other very doubtful ones because they were "sung twenty-five years ago [about 1840] in Negro camp-meetings," or because someone heard them sung by Negroes before the Civil War, or because variants of a tune were found in several states. In view of what has been shown in the earlier part of this discussion concerning white religious folk songs, it is obvious that such criteria were not at all safe. A score or more of songs about which the editors had some doubts but included as genuine Negro songs probably should have been omitted altogether.

While a great deal of the tune-borrowing in the spirituals is fragmentary, there are quite a few instances of whole tunes having been taken over. The following may be cited.

The Old Ship of Zion is a spiritual which appears in nearly all of the collections. This song is not only traditional among white people, but is found in one of their religious songsters as early as 1843.[73] It exists in two distinct versions. The 1843 published version was probably only one of several tunes then used in the revivals. It began

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[72] *Slave Songs*, p. vi.

[73] *Millennial Harp*, Supplement, p. 4.

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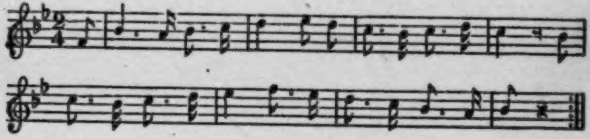
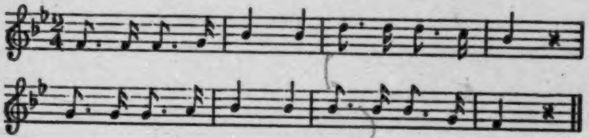
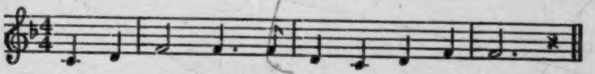


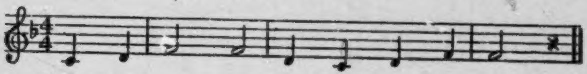
and in both words and tune it is obviously related to the Negro version, *Ol' Ship Mariah*,[74] beginning,



Another version of this tune,[75] beginning,



is the same tune as that found in one version of the spiritual *We'll Put John on the Island*,[76] and is closely akin to *Oh, Lordy, When You Come*,[77] which begins as follows:



In the same class with *Old Ship of Zion* should be mentioned several other songs which are traditional white

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[74] As sung on St. Helena Island. Ballanta's version, *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 34, is practically identical.

[75] Now rarely heard among white people, except in parodies. It is still sung in the Appalachians, however. See Richardson and Spaeth, *American Mountain Songs*, p. 71.

[76] Also sung by white people. In fact, the tunes undoubtedly were mixed before the Negroes took them over. For Negro variants see *Southern Workman*, 30, p. 590; *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro* (1924 ed.), p. 122; *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 96, 407.

[77] Sung on St. Helena Island.

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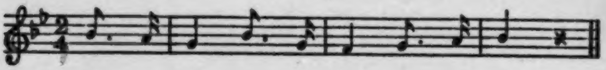
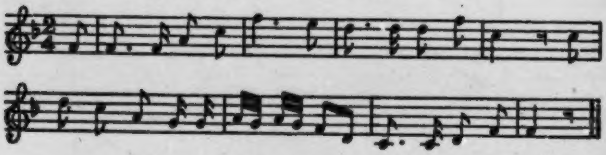
spirituals coming down from the era of the great revivals and which have most likely been borrowed by Negroes, viz., *Old Time Religion*, *Tell Me How You Feel When You Come Out the Wilderness*, *I Want to be Ready* (*Walk in Jerusalem Just Like John*), and *Safe in the Promised Land* (*Wonder Where Is Good Old Daniel*).

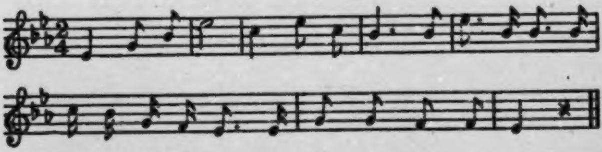
Lord, Remember Me,[78] one of the older spirituals, illustrates the way in which a song may be related to other songs. I have found two songs of this same title and sentiment in the white books.[79] The words of the chorus of one of these are like the spiritual, and the closing phrase of the tune is



The chorus of the spiritual, with closing phrase almost identical with the above phrase, is as follows:



Now the first part of this tune is the same as the chorus of another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*,[80]



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[78] *Slave Songs*, p. 12.
[79] *Millennial Harp*, I, 42 (same as *Christian Lyre*, I, 150); and II, 64.
[80] As in Dett, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, p. 52.

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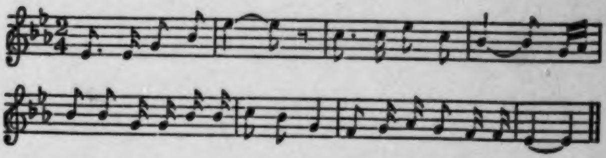
and this tune is practically identical with the chorus of *Camptown Races*, published by Stephen Foster in 1850.[81]



Krehbiel pointed out the similarity of *Lord, Remember Me* and *Camptown Races*,[82] but the more obvious connection of the latter with *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, escaped him. There have grown up various myths to the effect that Foster spent more or less time in the South and took his tunes from Negroes.[83] Foster was a Pennsylvanian of Scotch-Irish descent. He was never South except on a brief trip down the Mississippi and possibly a visit to Kentucky, both of these occurring after he had written most of his "Ethiopian" Melodies. Krehbiel said of the *Camptown Races* tune that "it is more likely that he [Foster] invented it and that it was borrowed in part for a hymn by the Negroes." Here we have an instance of a popular song partly displacing the religious tune which the Negroes had borrowed in *Lord, Remember Me*, and being adopted into another spiritual, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, which was probably already being sung to another tune.

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[81] See *Heart Songs*, pp. 352-54.

[82] *Afro-American Folk-Songs*, pp. 16-17.

[83] See, for example, *Negro Year Book*, 1925-26, p. 344, for a quotation (origin not given) telling how Foster journeyed South to get the tune of *Swanee River* from a Negro woman. As a matter of fact, he inserted "Swanee" in a song he had written after careful search of a map to find a name of two syllables and romantic sound. See *Stephen Collins Foster, a Biography*, by Harold Vincent Milligan, N. Y., 1920, pp. 61, 68, 72.

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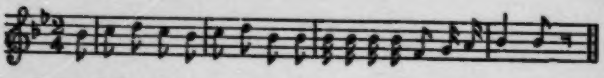
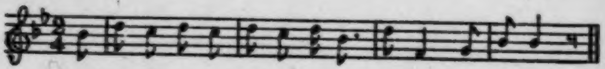
Who'll Jine de Union[84] is essentially the same as *The Christian Band*, a white song published as early as 1843.[85] The words of these two songs are about the same, except that the former uses as a refrain line "Who'll jine de union?" while the latter uses "I will be in this band, hallelujah." The following phrases, repeated, form the burden of the white song,



and the following phrases, repeated, form the stanzas of the spiritual:



The spiritual is an improvement melodically and rhythmically over the white song, but is nevertheless derived from it or from a variant of it which was never published in the white songsters.

The beautiful spiritual, *I'm a-Rolling Through an Unfriendly World*,[86] is akin to a white tune, *Judgment*, although the rhythm of the latter has been changed. There is probably a connecting link which is extinct, but the kinship becomes apparent if one neglects rhythm for the moment. The stanza tune *Judgment*,[87] with the notes

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[84] Published in *Cabin and Plantation Songs*, 1874, p. 220, and in successive editions of the Hampton songs, the latest being in Dett's edition, *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 142. This song is widely known, being sung on St. Helena Island.

[85] *Millennial Harp*, II, 30. There were earlier editions of this book, also preceding volumes of a similar nature by the same editors, but I am unable to find the earliest date of their publication.

[86] See Dett, *op. cit.*, p. 186, or any other good collection of spirituals.

[87] *Christian Lyre*, I, 90. Also in *Millennial Harp*, I, 32.

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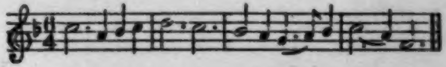
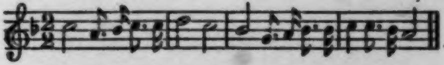
spaced to facilitate comparison with the spiritual immediately below it, is as follows:[88]

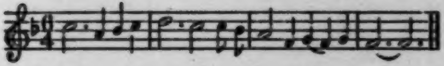
Hymn:



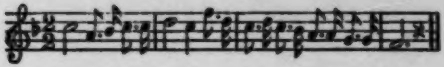
Spiritual:



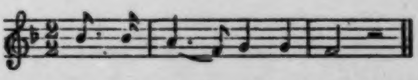
Hymn:



Spiritual:

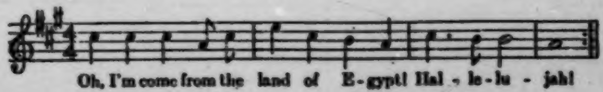


The chorus of *I'm a-Rolling* is not so closely related to *Judgment,* although the final phrase,



is the same as the final phrase of *Judgment* (see above).

The next example illustrates splendidly the possibility of relationship in both subject matter and tune between a spiritual and an old white song. The *Mariner's Hymn,*[89] as it was called in the white songsters, was made up of two simple and very similar phrases, one sung by a male voice, the other by a female voice. The latter phrase was as follows:



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[88] Incidentally, the harmonization published in the white songsters is the same as that in the spiritual.

[89] See *Millennial Harp,* II, 39.

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Now this tune—pentatonic, by the way—probably came from some sailor song,[90] and it must have had several variants among the white people. It is no accident that when the Negroes took it over the salt water stayed with it. As *I've Been Down into the Sea*, it is one of the most beautiful spirituals sung on St. Helena.[91] The stanzas have this tune,

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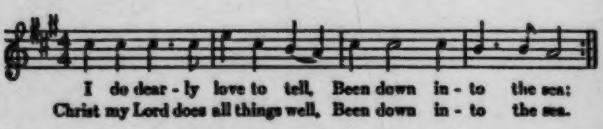
I do dear - ly love to tell, Been down in - to the sea:
Christ my Lord does all things well, Been down in - to the sea.

which is the same as the *Mariner's Hymn*, allowing for the greater number of syllables in the words of the closing measure of the spiritual. The chorus of the spiritual,

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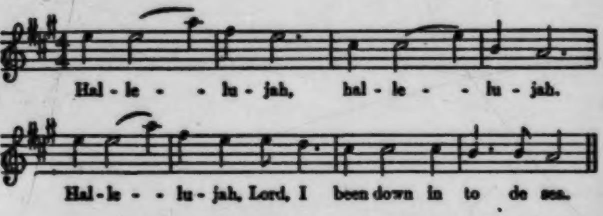
Hal - le - - lu - jah, hal - le - - lu - jah.
Hal - le - - lu - jah, Lord, I been down in to de sea.

may appear at first to be an innovation, but an examination shows it to be related to the closing tones of the stanza tune and to the following phrase from the chorus of another white song:[92]

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[90] It is similar to the hoisting chantey, *Blow, Boys, Blow*, for a version of which see *The Book of a Thousand Songs*. Incidentally, this chantey is pentatonic and is syncopated.

[91] For a published version, very similar to the St. Helena version given above, see James Weldon Johnson, *The Book of American Negro Spirituals*, p. 172.

[92] *Don't You See My Jesus Coming?* in *Millennial Harp*, I, 62; or *The Female Pilgrim* in *The Christian Lyre*, II, 212. The tune is pentatonic.

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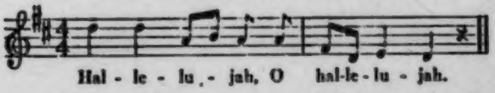
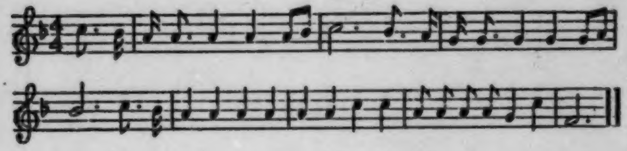
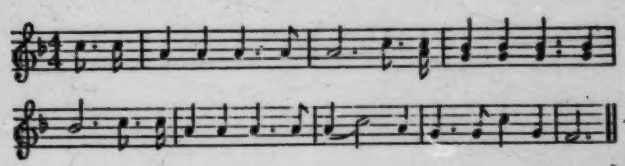


The tune of a white song *My Brother, I Wish You Well* is so much like the tune of the spiritual *There's a Meeting Here Tonight* that there was probably a connection between them. The white tune is as follows:[93]



The chorus of the spiritual is as follows:[94]



The spiritual *Just Now,*[95] formerly sung in the upper South, but rarely heard now, was taken, both words and tune, from the white hymn, *Come to Jesus,*[96] How perfectly the Negro learned the song is indicated by the tunes below. The first is the white hymn, the second the spirit-

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[93] *Millennial Harp*, I, 47.

[94] Alternative notes are shown in several measures because this phrase is sung both ways. See *Slave Songs*, p. 9, for two variants; also *Religious Folk-Songs of the Negro*, 1927, p. 182.

[95] See *Slave Songs*, p. 67. The editors thought that this became a Methodist hymn *after* the Negroes started it, and they included it because it was sung by Negroes in Maryland 25 years before. It was already at that time an Adventist hymn.

[96] *Millennial Harp*, I, 63.

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ual. The first stanza of the white hymn has exactly the same words as the third stanza of the Negro song.[7]

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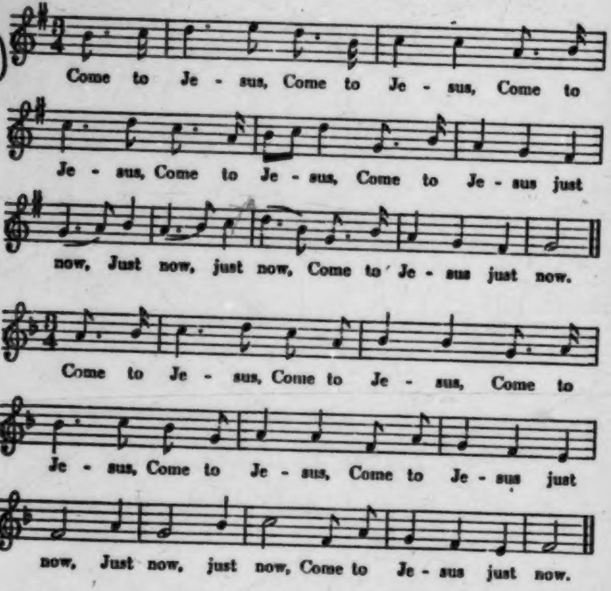
Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to
Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus just
now, Just now, just now, Come to Je - sus just now.
Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to
Je - sus, Come to Je - sus, Come to Je - sus just
now, Just now, just now, Come to Je - sus just now.

The task of identifying two tunes which are related is a thrilling one, but is very teasing and elusive. One might come across a spiritual tune which unmistakably suggests an old white tune, yet one may be unable to find the white tune without hours and hours of search. Sometimes the words and music throughout are similar, as in some of the cases cited above, and it is easy to find the tune wanted. Sometimes there is a slight clue in the words of the spiritual which throws light on its origin. For example, in Nettleton's *Village Hymns*,[98] which contains words only, there is a song beginning "Angel, roll the rock away." There is a spiritual known as *De Angel Rolled de Stone Away.*[99] The white song is noted as sung to a tune called Hampton. In another hymn book[100] we find this tune to entirely different words. The opening strain is

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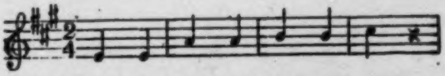
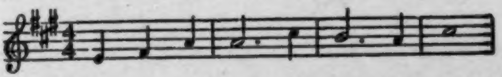
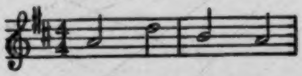
[7] In another stanza the white song has "Get religion just now," while the Negro song has "Good religion just now."



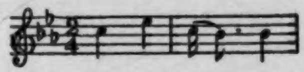
The spiritual begins in a very similar way:



and three of the four phrases in the spirituals are made up of this strain. To cite another example, several white songs contained the expression, "ride on, Jesus," and one for which the tune is available has the following phrase on the words, "ride on, Jesus."[101]



The spiritual, *Ride on, Jesus*, has the same phrase:[102]



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[98] P. 117.

[99] See *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 80, for a published version.

[100] *Christian Lyre*, II, 20.

[101] *Millennial Harp*, I, 52.

[102] Natalie Curtis Burlin, *Negro Folk-Songs*, Book I, No. 1; also *St. Helena Island Spirituals*, p. 92.

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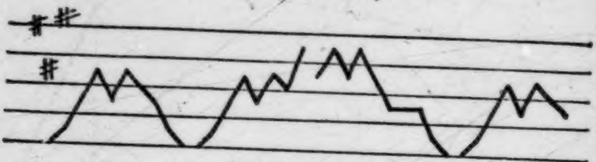
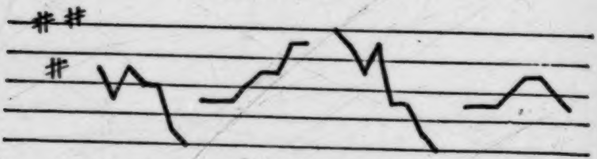
• 177 533 The rhythmic changes which took place in the songs borrowed from white people are significant. They account for some of the difficulty one encounters in tracing melodic parallels. To cite an instance of this sort: there is evidence that, omitting rhythmic factors, the old favorite, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, is a variant of one of the tunes of *Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound.* The following tune graph, which represents the melody but neglects tempo, shows this possibility.[103]



Amazing Grace



Swing Low

Summary and Conclusion

The examples cited above illustrate various types of borrowing: (1) both tune and words borrowed with very little alteration; (2) tune alone borrowed, and melodic or rhythmic adaptations introduced by Negroes; (3) a short phrase of a white tune used as the basis for a spiritual tune,

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[103] In this connection I might state that R. W. Gordon, of the Archive of American Folk-Song, Library of Congress, told me that he has a traditional white version of *Swing Low*. This may be a connecting link between *Amazing Grace* and the spiritual. I am aware that it has recently been claimed that the original tune of *Swing Low* has been found in Africa, but I consider the claim of no value until some direct evidence is presented.

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with characteristic rhythmic changes. While some of the borrowed spirituals appear on the face to be more or less "spurious," others, such as *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, *I'm a-Rolling*, *I've Been Down Into de Sea*, etc., are among the best of Negro songs.

The question at once comes up, how important are these cases statistically? That is difficult to say, but the situation may be summed up in this way: out of 82 tunes in Part I and Part II of the songster, *Millennial Harp*, ten, or one-eighth, may be traced in whole or in part into the spirituals. If this one book, which contains a mere sprinkling of the really folksy white songs, can account for so many spirituals, the chances are very high that, if the total range of white religious folk tunes were available, the proportion of tunes which crossed over into the spirituals would be surprisingly large. Of more importance than the statistical factor, however, is the fact that there are borrowed tunes among the spirituals which are in no way distinguishable from the rest of the spiritual tunes. Thus we have additional confirmation of the findings indicated previously, namely, that, with the exception of rhythm and possibly larger use of the pentatonic scale, the spirituals are not different musically from white folk tunes.

If, in addition to these considerations, it be remembered that this study has not attempted to explore the vast possibilities of specific borrowings from the popular ballads, play songs, and nursery songs brought to this country from England, nor from early American popular music and later minstrel music;[104] that numerous

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[104] To indicate possibilities, note the similarity of a part of *In Bright Mansions Above* and *Wearing of the Green*; and the likeness of *Steal Away* to *Farmer's in the Dell*.

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177 533 songs known as spirituals by the Negroes survive in the white folk tradition as white songs;[105] and that instances are known of a white man's having composed spirituals for Negroes;[106] it will be seen that the story of the origin of the spirituals has only begun to be written. But the data yielded by even a small segment of white religious folk songs seem to indicate that the anthropological question as to what happened when the Negro, with a system of music admittedly different, came into contact with white music in the master-slave relationship, deserves an answer similar to that given in regard to dialect, namely, that the general pattern and many of the particulars of the music developed in slavery were borrowed from white folk music.

To claim that the Negro took all of the spirituals from white tunes, that he has contributed nothing himself, would be stupid. There are undoubtedly spirituals of Negro composition, there are some white songs of Negro origin, and there are probably a few tunes which came from Africa. Furthermore, the instances of borrowing show that Negroes usually made rhythmic changes in the tunes they [178] borrowed. But, if the several possible theories concerning the spirituals be listed as follows: (1) they are derived directly from Africa, (2) they are of American Negro origin,

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[105] For example, Howard W. Odum says that *We're Goin' to End This Warfare (Down by the River)* was sung in Georgia during his youth as a white camp-meeting song. For data along this line, see White, *American Negro Folk-Songs*, Chaps. I, II, and Appendix III; and Pound, "The Ancestry of a Negro Spiritual," *Modern Language Notes*, 33, pp. 442-4.

[106] Henry C. Work, a white abolitionist, wrote *Kingdom's Coming*, *Freedom Over Me*, and *Babylon is Fallen*. See *American Negro Folk-Songs*, pp. 51, 170. In this connection I might also point out that art songs of recent origin are even now in process of becoming "adopted" as Negro spirituals, examples being *Deep River* and *Going Home*, the latter based on a movement of Dvořák's *New World Symphony*.

based on African patterns, (3) they are selections from 177
white music, selections influenced by the Negro's African 178
musical heritage, (4) they are largely borrowed directly 533
from white folk music, as attested by the presence of the same traits to about the same extent in both musics; then it is seen that either of the latter two theories is more plausible than the former two.

There has been so much sentimentalizing on the spirituals that it will be difficult for some people to accept such a conclusion. The various statements of the "romantic" origins of the spirituals, of their being "America's only indigenous folk song," of their springing "ready made from the white heat of religious fervor," may be interesting as sentiments, but as scientific points of view on a question of musical relationships they are worthless. It is to be hoped that those who are convinced of the African origin of the spirituals will look closely into their English-American background before they embrace their conclusions.

And what does it all come to? On the scientific side, it appears that Wallaschek was substantially correct in his judgment after all.[107] The Negro's contribution seems to have been the introduction of his own rhythmic devices, the elaboration, sometimes the simplification, of the melodic patterns of white songs, and the preservation of a large body of folk song which might otherwise have been extinct by now.

On the artistic and appreciative side, it should mean 533
nothing—that is, nothing which should change anyone's appreciation or enjoyment of the Negro spiritual. As it

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[107] See *supra*, p. 73.

XVI

GOING TO HEAVEN BY LAND[12]

There were two brothers who had confessed Christ 539
and were ready to be baptized. The preacher took one of them by the hand and led him down into the water. He said, "My son, I baptize you in the name of the Father and the Son," and he plunged him under. The boy slipped out of the preacher's hand and was drowned before he could be saved. So it was the second boy's turn to be baptized. The preacher called him, but he said, "Mister, my brother may have gone to heaven by water, but I am going by land," and he wouldn't allow the preacher to baptize him.

XVII

WHY THE COLORED MAN ISN'T IN HEAVEN TODAY[13]

Once a colored man started for heaven. On arriving at the gate, St. Peter the gate keeper ask him his mission. He told St. Peter he wanted to go to heaven. St. Peter ask him if he came a-riding or walking. He said walking. St. Peter said, "I'm mighty sorry, but I can't let you in. You must come riding." The colored man started back home. On his way home he met a white man. He asked the white man, "Where are you going?" The white man said, "To heaven." The colored man said, "I just came from there. St. Peter wouldn't let me in, say I must

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[12] As written by Nathan J. Smalls, student at Penn School. There is a surprising number of tales and jokes about preachers, deacons, etc., in the Sea Islands. Most of them are of fairly recent origin, having been introduced from the outside. Humerous anecdotes about Irishmen are also very common, as they are in many other parts of the South. I was surprised to find on St. Helena Island practically every Irishman story that I was familiar with in Texas as a boy. [538] [177]

[13] As written by Kermit Smalls, student in Penn School.

XXI

539

CLOSING VERSES

1.

I step on a tin,
De tinnin ben',
Dat's de way
My story en'.

2.[19]

I step on de lane
An' walk wid a cane,
An' dat's de way
My story en'.

RIDDLES

524 Several hundred riddles are in circulation on St. Helena. The children can recall amazing numbers of them, especially when riddle contests are held. Some of them can make up new ones indefinitely under the stimulus of competition.

524 •177 For the most part the riddles seem to be of European descent, although in many instances it is difficult to say whether one is African or European. Certainly some of them sound more like the African discussion riddles than the ordinary English riddle. For example, a boy relates that a girl was saved from drowning by three men. Trackwell traces her to the river, Divewell recovers her from the water, Breathewell breathes life back into her. "Which one," asks the narrator, "has the best claim to the girl?" Then an argument takes place, sometimes, but rarely, ending in agreement on one of the three. There

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[19] I encountered this only once, in a story told by a girl at Land's End School.

is also a figurative type of riddle which is scarcely a riddle from the white child's point of view but which is very much like the African figurative questions. For example, the riddle, 524 177

A rose in de gyaa'den an' a rose outside, what one you take? *Ans.* Rose in de gyaa'den is married gal, rose outside single gal,

is the same sort of thing as the following African riddle:

The tree in our yard gives shade only to our neighbors. *Ans.* A virgin. She is not of use to men of her own family.

Many of the riddles are of rather recent origin and have been brought in by visitors and immigrants, by joke books, advertising booklets, and the like.

All of the riddles collected on St. Helena cannot be reproduced here, but enough may be given to show the range and variety of this type of folklore. 524

1. Horse in de stable an' mange (mane) outside, or Horse in de stable an' reinge (reins) outside. *Ans.* 'Tatuh in de bed an de wine (vine) outside.
2. Chip cherry up, chip cherry down; no man can climb chip cherry tree. *Ans.* Smoke.
3. Black hen set on de red hen's nes'. *Ans.* Pot on de fiah.
4. White man on a red horse back. *Ans.* Teet' on de gums.
5. Somet'in' holler all day an' holler all night. *Ans.* Tree holler.
6. Grumble all day an' grumble all night. *Ans.* Grummle (i.e., groundmole).
7. Go t'rough a tree an' leave e' guts behin'. *Ans.* Needle an' t'read t'rough de cloth.
8. One hun'ed windows an' no do'. *Ans.* Fish net.
9. If deh a hun'ed room, 'e go t'rough 'em all. *Ans.* Broom

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9. Don' take no mo' on yo' heels dan you can kick off wid yo' toes. 538
10. Feed you wid corn, choke you wid de cob.

TOASTS, RHYMES, AND GAMES

The young people know quite a few "toasts," play rhymes, game songs, and the like. Sometimes even an adult will respond to a request to "say a piece" at a party by giving a bit of child's verse. On one occasion a man recited in a formal manner a little piece beginning, 524 538

My pretty pink, I really think
That you and I should marry. (539)

Some of the rhymes and games are very old, having been brought over by the English. Others are of recent origin and introduction. Some of the rhymes, for example, are survivals of ante-bellum minstrel verse, and a few are attempts at original verse. (177).

Toasts[20]

273
574
576
539

I

Some water I hol' in dis glass
Between my finger an' t'umb.
If I don' drink it all,
I lef' you some.

II

The rose is red
An' violets are blue,
Honey is sweet
An' so are you.

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[20] For four other toasts, see Parsons, p. 176. For numerous American versions of children's games, rhymes, etc., see W. W. Newell, *Games and Songs of American Children.*

beliefs of the Southern Negroes as a whole. Indeed, they 771
have actually ceased to take seriously many of the old- 171
time superstitions because of the influence which Penn
School has had. Undoubtedly there are still some people 759
who patronize "root doctors" or "cunjuh men," in order 754
to procure charms of various sorts and to get "spells" or
"voodoo" put on their enemies. There are also some who 757
actually use the folk remedies for various ills, and there 241
are some who plant crops and kill hogs according to lunar 231
phases. But the general status of the island culture as 821
far as superstition is concerned is not very far below the
level of the more backward white groups in this country.
A surprisingly large proportion of the Negro folk beliefs 177
found in the South is of European descent, and this holds
true for the beliefs of the St. Helena Island Negroes.

Following are some of the traditional folk beliefs 844
which seem to be actually practiced to some extent. Mid- 789
wives, without the patient's knowledge, sometimes put a
hoe or plow point or an ax under the bed to cut the after-
pains attending child-birth. It is also thought that if the 757
patient will drink tea made from gizzard which has been 825
dried and powdered, or tea made from the nest of the mud
dauber, the after-pains will be reduced. Most families
try to pay the midwife promptly for her services, for it is
believed that failure to pay may cause her eyes, or even
her mind, to be affected. Sometimes a Bible or a broom 758
may be seen lying on the pillow above the head of a sick 789
person. This is supposed to prevent the spirits from tak- 776
ing the person away. Mrs. King, the community nurse, 757
stated that she has occasionally had to combat the use of
such remedies as cow excreta and vinegar heated for boils,

Sir Charles Lyell even found a difference in the cultural development of the various sea-island Negroes. Those on the smaller plantations on St. Simon's Island were, for instance, more civilized than those on the larger estates.[9] 567 181

When Edward L. Pierce visited St. Helena Island in 1862 to observe the plantation conditions as an agent for the Federal Government, he arrived at the conclusion that slavery had bred out of the Negro all manly qualities. They had become "an abject race, more docile and submissive than those of any other locality." They did not want to fight; they did not want to be uplifted; they wanted to be left alone. "Nowhere has the deterioration of the Negroes from their native manhood," he wrote in an article for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "been carried so far as on these Sea Islands,—a deterioration due to their isolation from the excitements of more populous districts, the constant serveillance of the overseers, and their intermarriage with one another, involving a physical degeneracy with which inexorable Nature punishes disobedience to her laws."[10]

567 177 On St. Helena Island, where there were some two thousand slaves to a little more than two hundred whites, the Negroes learned very slowly the ways of the whites. Their mastery of English was far less advanced than that of the Piedmont slaves. 567 191 They spoke a garbled English, imperfect words and expressions which they and their parents and grandparents had learned from the few whites with whom they came in contact. Their speech mystified the northern missionaries who came to the Island

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[9] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 268.

[10] *Atlantic Monthly*, Sept., 1863; also in E. L. Pierce, *Addresses and Papers*, p. 106.

of all those who knew the South, that the colored people 567
of the Sea Islands, are the lowest grade of Negroes in 181
America. I'm sure I hope I shall never see a worse set 184
than those who live on our part of St. Helena Island."[13] Miss Harriet Ware, who had been conducting a school on St. Helena, concluded in 1863 that "as a general thing the Edisto people are a better class of blacks, more intelligent and cultivated, so to speak."[14]

It is not surprising that the St. Helena slaves should 567
have been less advanced than those even of neighboring 184
islands, for as it has already been pointed out, St. Helena 177
Island was one of the most isolated of the Sea Islands. It (133)
is a buffer from the Atlantic for two other large islands, and the Island itself is cut up into various small islands by the broad tidal creeks which interlace it. It is likely that at least half of the more than two thousand slaves who inhabited St. Helena in 1860 had never been off the Island, for Beaufort was difficult to reach and only the most privileged were allowed to go there. Shut off from contact with the outside world, they were thus unfamiliar with many of the cultural traits of the whites which had sprung up since their own forebears had become "tamed."

It is remarkable, then, that the slaves should have 567
achieved as much of the culture of the whites as they did. 177
They were quick to learn from the few whites with whom they were thrown and from the house servants who went back and forth with the master's family from the Island

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[13] Arthur Sumner Papers. Dec., 26, 1862.

[14] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 150. See also the opinion of Charles P. Ware, *ibid.*, p. 97; of W. C. Gannett, *ibid.*, p. 178; and see James S. Pike, *The Prostrate State: South Carolina Under Negro Government*, ch. XXXII; Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour*, p. 94; Hazard Stevens, *The Life of Isaac Ingalls Stevens*, II, 354.

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567 to Beaufort, Charleston, and the North. Some of the St.
177 Helena people were as alert and ambitious as the whites
themselves. Charles Ware, of Massachusetts, in 1862
567 described Charles, the carpenter on Hope plantation, as "a
554 man after my own heart." "He attracted me first by his
dignified and respectful demeanor, and by his superior culture. He has a little touch of self-consideration. He, more than any other negro I know, seems to me like a white person."[18]

SOCIAL CLASSES

The Negroes themselves perhaps unconsciously set a premium on a knowledge of "buckra" ways, for they placed in the upper classes of their social scale those who had superior advantages of learning the customs of the dominant race. The "swonga" people were the drivers who took their orders directly from the overseer, the house servants who were intimately associated with the master's and the overseer's families, the mechanics who were permitted to hire their own time from their masters and work in Beaufort or Charleston. To this group also belonged any among them who from superior rank or intelligence acted as their official or self-appointed leaders. The religious leaders and the plantation watchmen were usually "swonga" Negroes, as were also the witch doctors and those who could boast of physical prowess. It is obviously difficult to point out definitely the various gradations in the social classes among the slaves, but in general the drivers and mechanics stood at the head, followed by the house servants, and at the bottom of the scale stood the field hands.

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[18] *Letters from Port Royal*, p. 82.

567 men may have, for instance, as many wives as they please, so long as they do not quarrel about such matters."[18] [177] [595] Nevertheless, most planters insisted that their slaves give up their African customs of polygamy and accept the Christian standard of monogamy as the rule of their family life.

567 177 584 St. Helena planters quite generally required their slaves to choose a mate for life, and they attempted to impress the solemnity of the marriage upon the contracting parties by the observance of a ceremony. The engagement of a slave couple was formally recognized on the plantation when the black man asked the master's permission to marry, designating specifically the chosen girl. Many owners encouraged their men to choose from among the girls of their own plantations, but they did not always insist upon it.[19] A man might select his wife from another plantation on the Island, but if he did so he must suffer the inconveniences of not having a woman to look after his clothes, grind his corn into grits, and cook his meals. On the other hand, a wife on a neighboring plantation gave the husband an excuse for leaving his own plantation frequently.

567 585 177 Upon gaining permission to marry, the couple might request that the ceremony be performed at once, whereupon the planter, if without too many religious scruples, might informally "pronounce" them man and wife. The master was more likely to insist, however, upon a marriage by a white preacher or by one of the religious leaders

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[18] Hall, *Travels in North America*, II, 216.

[19] Mr. J. Swinton Whaley, of Little Edisto Island, possesses today a bill of sale for a Negro girl his father paid $1,200 for in order that one of his slaves might have the wife he loved.

from among his own slaves. A wedding was often made 567
the occasion of a general celebration on the plantation. 585
The master gave special provisions, such as beef and rice 177
for making a stew, and molasses for sweetened water to wash it down, and the young ladies made the cake.[20] The mistress and her daughters also influenced the bride to come to the ceremony properly gowned in white with a flowing veil improvised from a discarded window curtain from the master's house. The mistress might provide this extra finery or the bride herself might purchase it with her hoarded savings. If it were the marriage of a house servant, the ceremony might be performed in the kitchen or dining room of the "big house" or in a nearby grove of trees. Marriages of field hands were frequently performed in the open or in the praise house, as the plantation church was called. 567

After the feasting and the merrymaking were over, 585
the couple went home to the cabin which the master or
overseer had set aside for them. But they did not always 567
go home destined to remain faithful to the vows which 585
they had just taken. The looseness of the slave's code of 837
morality was one of the evils most often cited against
him.[21] Despite the preachers' instructions upon the na- (577)
ture, sacredness, and perpetuity of marriage many slaves did not hold themselves to such a doctrine. This circumstance is not surprising when one considers the polygamous customs of their African ancestors and the failure of law either to recognize or protect Negro marriages. The issue of an extra-marital relation placed but little additional

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[20] Murray, *Letters from the United States*, p. 224.

[21] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 272, 273.

567 early days of the Civil War, "all stand up in the middle
796 of the floor, and when the 'sperichil' is struck up, begin
first walking and by-and-by shuffling around, one after
535 the other, in a ring. The foot is hardly taken from the
floor, and the progression is mainly due to a jerking, hitching
motion, which agitates the entire shouter, and soon
brings out streams of perspiration. Sometimes they dance
567 silently, sometimes as they shuffle they sing the chorus of
796 the spiritual, and sometimes the song itself is also sung
by the dancers. But more frequently a band, composed of
535 some of the best singers and tired shouters, stand [*sic*]
533 at the side of the room to 'base' the others, singing the
body of the song and clapping their hands together or on
their knees. Song and dance are alike extremely energetic,
and often, when the shout lasts into the middle of the
night, the monotonous thud, thud of the feet prevents
sleep within half a mile of the praise-house."[58]

Miss Towne thought the shout to be "certainly the re-
567 mains of some old idol worship." "I never saw anything
796 so savage," she said. "They call it a religious ceremony,
but it seems more like a regular frolic to me."[59] The
(535) shout was, indeed, a modification of the Negro's regular
dance. After a Negro was converted he no longer at-
567 tended dances in the cabins where "de sinners cross um
797 feet," for the Methodist and Baptist preachers and mis-
535 sionaries taught the slaves that dancing was evil. He went
instead to the praise house where the same dance, recently
177 in vogue today as the "Charleston," was performed, with-

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[58] *Ibid.*, p. 278; also in *Nation*, May 30, 1867. For other descriptions of shouts on St. Helena Island see *Letters and Diary of Laura M. Towne*, pp. 20, 21, 22, 23.

[59] *Letters and Diary*, p. 20.

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out crossing the feet, to the tune of a spiritual. Nor did 567
the Negroes take their violins into the praise houses, for 797
the missionaries also taught them that fiddle music was 535
sinful since the fiddle furnished the tunes for the old [533]
dances. The last violin on St. Helena Island before the [534]
Civil War is said to have been owned by a Negro on Coffin's Point, but he got rid of it before "big gun shoot," as the Negroes called the battle of Port Royal.

Sir Charles Lyell observed the same kind of religious worship on the Georgia Sea Islands and mainland. "On the Hopeton plantation above twenty violins have been silenced by the Methodist missionaries," he wrote in 1845. "At the Methodist prayer-meetings, they are permitted [533]
to move rapidly in a ring, joining hands in token of brotherly love, presenting first the right hand and then the left, in which manœuvre, I am told, they sometimes contrive to take enough exercise to serve as a substitute for the dance, it being, in fact, a kind of spiritual *boulanger* [?], while the singing of psalms, in and out of chapel, compensates in no small degree for the songs they have been required to renounce."[80]

The religious life of the slaves was organized by the 567
whites upon the same plan as their own. On plantations 795
of any size, slaves who had joined the church were formed 793
into a class, at the head of which was one of their own number, acting as deacon or leader, who was also sometimes a licensed preacher.[81] The leader who was the head of the praise house often decided in council with his subordinates, the watchmen, whether a candidate for member-

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[80] Lyell, *Second Visit to the United States*, I, 269, 270.

[81] "Negro Slavery at the South," DeBow, *Industrial Resources of the United States*, II, 251.